



Library of the Theological Seminary.

PRINCETON, N. J.

*Gran Fund*

*1841*  
*1879*

BX 1068 .D472 1941 v.2  
Digby, Kenelm Henry, 1800-  
1880.

Shelf.....

Mores Catholici









MORES CATHOLICI:  
OR,  
AGES OF FAITH.

B  
KINELM H. DIGBY, ESQ.

SECOND VOLUME.



CINCINNATI:  
PUBLISHED BY THE CATHOLIC SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF  
RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

STEREOTYPED BY J. A. JAMES.

1841.

MOORE'S CATHOLICISM

AGES OF FAITH

MOORE'S CATHOLICISM

MOORE'S CATHOLICISM

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2022 with funding from  
Princeton Theological Seminary Library





# SUMMARY.

---

## THE THIRD BOOK.

### CHAPTER III.

How the meek possessed the beauties and advantages of the natural world—How all creatures were objects of their love—Great enterprises to aid material interests—Preservation of forests, love of agriculture—Men subjects, not citizens—Yet nature alone was felt to be not sufficient—How the Catholic religion sanctified it—The testimony of the moderns themselves—Oratories, images, Calvaries, and crosses, erected to sanctify the visible nature—Places of pilgrimage—Their origin and use—Isolated crosses—Why they were venerated—The happiness of the meek in relation to the earth ----- p. 3.

### CHAPTER IV.

How the earth supplied intellectual riches—Of poetry, and the advantage to be derived from it—Adopted by the holy Fathers, many of whom cultivated it—How it was favoured by the secular clergy and by monks—Cultivated by the people—Loved with enthusiasm by all classes—Meekness conduced to this—Poetry cultivated by the feudal nobles—Character of the poetry of the middle ages—Its power upon minds—Its religious tone—Shakspeare, Dante, Tasso, St. Avitus—The old French poets—Their merit—Their idea of the end and nature of poetry—Their own lives—Dramatic poetry—The mysteries ----- p. 25.

### CHAPTER V.

On what ground the riches of learning were possessed by Christians—How it was prized, and cultivated, and extended, by means of the Church—The learning of the clergy, secular and regular—The ancient libraries—The labour and spirit of the monks in writing books—Their attention to the vulgar tongue, to history, and to every branch of learning—The care with which manuscripts were preserved, and the enthusiasm with which the invention of printing was hailed—How great the love for learning—The learning of the laity—General character of the learning of the middle ages—Summary of the literature of France from the fifth to the tenth century—Why the sciences are more cultivated by the moderns, who are naturally more averse to historical, religious, and moral studies—Glance at the modern learning—Yet in point of science, the books of the middle ages remarkable—The scholastic doctors as naturalists—The scholastic theology—General style of the writers of the middle age—Their Latinity—Influence of the Catholic religion on the study of heathen literature—The character of learning in application to secular objects—The study of medicine and of law ----- p. 51.

### CHAPTER VI.

Rise and progress of the Christian schools—Monastic and secular, parochial and metropolitan—Establishment of universities—Their privileges and honours—The advantages of the monastic schools—General character of the ecclesiastical schools—Their disci-

pline—Their dignified and holy aspect—Manners of their students—Their zeal for learning—The mode of instruction—Object of the universities—Founded by religion for the poor—The evils attending them—Dignity and happiness of the ancient scholastic life ----- p. 107.

## CHAPTER VII.

Friendship belonged to the meek—How it was promoted by the Catholic religion, by the principles and manners of the meek—The friendships of chivalry—Those of the religious society—Spiritual friendship—Summary of the evidence that the meek possessed the earth ----- p. 141.

# THE FOURTH BOOK.

## CHAPTER I.

The history of the ages of faith in relation to blessed mourning—Objectors reminded that religion does not obtrude melancholy themes upon men—The mourning of the world truly great in all ages; exemplified in the writings of ancient and modern times ----- p. 155.

## CHAPTER II.

Joy and cheerfulness the pervading spirit of the ages of faith—The Catholic religion excludes melancholy—Examples and sentiments of monks, pilgrims, the holy fathers, and of the poets of the world during the middle ages—Yet mourning belonged to the blessed race—What kind of mourning—The mourning of nature—The mourning of wisdom—The mourning of love ----- p. 161.

## CHAPTER III.

The mourning of piety—The necessity for affliction in the spiritual life; how it was sanctified—The contrast to heathen sentiments; examples of the former, and of Christians—Louis-Le-Gros—Pélisson—Piety mourned by reason of the contemplation of heaven, and the remembrance of sin; of a regard for humanity in general, and of a view of the evils which are in the world—The insensibility of the crowd—The desolations of heresy and of false Christians—Why Catholics must mourn more than other men from loving order and knowing truth—The mourning of converts, from the new view of history which opens on them, and from the loss of former friends—The mourning caused by sympathy with all members of the city of God—The mourning from contemplating the Passion of Christ ----- p. 176.

## CHAPTER IV.

The mourning of penitents, that the spirit of self-sacrifice was unknown to the heathens—The advantages of abstinence discerned by the ancients—The Christian doctrine of penance—The severe principles of early ages—What subsequent abuse was corrected ----- p. 194.



## CHAPTER V.

The pilgrimages of penitents, and their mourning—The origin of their appointment by the Church—Opinion of the ancient saints—The advantages of travel recognized by the heathen philosophers—Grounds and utility of Christian pilgrimages—Examples of those of the middle ages—That of St. Paula—The sufferings and mournings of pilgrims—The journeys of our Lord—The holy and dignified character of the ordinary traveller in ages of faith; the difficulties he had to encounter—The penitential spirit of the Crusaders—The manners prescribed to pilgrims—What assistance was afforded them on the way—Hospitals and inns—The protection afforded to travellers by the Holy See—Their entertainment recommended—The spirit of hospitality—The interest attached to the pilgrim: how far due—His character; his sentiments illustrated from the Chronicle of Nicole—The mourning which belonged to his observation of the world----- p. 205.

## CHAPTER VI.

The mourning consequent upon death—The character of death had been changed by the resurrection of Christ—The aspect during ages of faith the same in youth as in old age—The mourning attached to sickness—The state of sickness also changed—The language addressed to the sick—The utility of sickness recognized by the heathen philosophers—The Christian consolations for the sick—The manners of the sick in ages of faith—The comforts afforded them by the Church ----- p. 244.

## CHAPTER VII.

The thought of death familiar to men in ages of faith—Why this was so—What grounds for mourning at the thought of death—The speedy judgment which follows it attested by visions—St. Augustin's opinion respecting them—The mourning for death as a punishment, as having been endured by Christ, as the prelude to judgment—Terrors of an evil death—The death of the saints—Examples from the chronicles of the middle ages; general remarks upon them; uniformity of observances; the reception of ashes; the use of the cross; aspect of the body; assumption of the religious habit—Moral characteristics of death in the middle ages; its foreknowledge and supernatural announcement; examples—The suddenness of many holy deaths—Doctrine of the ages of faith on this head—The stedfast hope and tranquillity of men in death—Their last words—Administration of the last sacrament—The dying frankly warned of their danger—Modern opinion on this head—Zeal in assisting the dying—Remarkable narratives connected with it—The mourning of survivors, and their consolations—The passing bell—The burial—What was the doctrine respecting its importance—Custom of the first Christians—The form of burial, monastic, episcopal, collegiate, royal, and secular—What mourning was allowed at funerals by the canons----- p. 256.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The comfort reserved for mourning survivors—Prayer for the dead; its origin; anniversaries; the office of the dead—Doctrine of the Church; customs derived from it—Alfred's Prayer ----- p. 302.

## CHAPTER IX.

The zeal of mourners in erecting tombs over the dead—Customs of the first Christians in choice of locality—The catacombs of Rome—What was thought respecting burial in holy ground, and why it was desirable—When the dead were first buried in churches—Variation of discipline—What the canons prescribed—Style of sepulchral inscriptions—Those in the primitive and middle ages—Examples; the symbols and imagery of their tombs—Cemeteries—Destruction of ancient monuments by political and heretical insanity in latter ages—Modern Cemeteries ----- p. 308.

## SUMMARY.

## CHAPTER X.

The argument recapitulated—The happiness of mourners—Objections drawn from history answered—The prosperity of the wicked shown to be their punishment—Conclusion ----- p. 323.

## THE FIFTH BOOK.

## CHAPTER I.

The predominant passion of the ages of faith a thirst for justice—The wants of man's nature—The necessity for having a Divine object felt and shown—The language of the ancient writers on this head ----- p. 330.

## CHAPTER II.

The voice of the Church was the voice of desire—The sacred offices expressed the thirst for justice, and originated in that desire—Sketch of their history—The observance of the canonical hours—The divisions of time—The divisions of the office—The necessity for a uniform liturgy—The mode of celebrating the Christian mysteries always essentially the same—The ecclesiastical offices considered in relation to beauty, justice, and truth—Origin and use of ceremony—The ceremonies of the Catholic Church—Objections against them considered—The moral value and beauty of the institution of the canonical hours—The opinion of the holy fathers respecting the night—The vigils—The night of the middle ages—The offices of the morning and day—The holy mass—Nones—Vespers—Complin ----- p. 339.

## CHAPTER III.

General observations respecting the sacred offices—Origin and explanation of the universal adoption of the Latin tongue in the public offices of the Western Church—Remarks on the language of the Catholic liturgy—Its symbolic character—The Christian use of symbolism, in relation to language and ceremonies—Admirable beauty of the offices—Their historic character—The litanies—Remarks on the objections brought against them—Grandeur and decorum observed in all parts of the Divine office—Its sublime poetry—The beauty and solemnity of what was also visible in the Church—Magnificence in that respect of the middle ages—The use of incense traced and explained—The custom of having lights—An occasion of great splendour—The procession—Its origin and importance—Its symbolic character, described by St. Bernard --- p. 367.

## CHAPTER IV.

Importance of music in the estimation of the ancients, of the holy fathers, and of the scholastic theologians—History of Church music—That of the middle ages: its excellence and characteristics—Origin and use of organs—The aurea missa—Decline of Church music ----- p. 394.

## CHAPTER V.

Opinion of the middle ages respecting the music of the Divine offices—Psalmody, the spirit of the Psalms, became the spirit of the age—The people joined with the clergy in singing the office—Provision every where to meet the love of the people for the Catholic offices—Wisdom of this—The external behaviour of men in the churches regulated—Why importance was attached to it—What devotions recommended—Beads—Books—The eulogia—No one to enter armed—Reverence due to the sacred mysteries, and the rules which it dictated—A visit to a Catholic church—The approach; the bells; the paradise and portal; the multitude within, and the variety of character which it comprised—Charm of this spectacle—General impressions vary with the hour—The suppliant crowd—The Ineffable presence—Experience of the ages of faith in respect to it—The churches are only monuments of it—The effects described by St. Bonaventura, and verified in Tasso. 406



# MORES CATHOLICI;

OR,

## AGES OF FAITH.

---

### THE THIRD BOOK.

#### CHAPTER III.

BUT it was not alone within towered cities, or the walls of vast basilicas that religion gave to the meek the possession of the earth. Religious men possessed the isles of Iona and Lindisfarne, and hermits wild rocks in the desert sea. For those who lived well, who gave their hearts to God, and placed their happiness in him, the whole world was but a temple, as Vauquelin, the Lord of Iveteaux, said in his address to princes.\* “To a faithful man the whole world is full of riches,” as St. Bonaventura said, “*fideli homini totus mundus divitiarum est*:—for all things good and evil are made to serve him.”† Whatever in creation was beautiful, being referred to the glory of God, who alone is the origin and source of all things, was part of the inalienable inheritance of the meek, so that Louis of Blois says, “If you once possess God you possess all the rest. He comprises within himself all that delights our hearts and gives us pleasure. Being himself the model, the first type of all things, he is every thing: he is the increated essence of all that is; for without doubt, in his eternal science, he has had from all eternity the plan and idea of all that he has made; all that has received existence from him has been known to him always, has always lived, and will live for ever in his divine thoughts. We ourselves have in this manner been eternally present to the thought of God. In this sense we are in him from all eternity; in this sense we are uncreated, because in him, in his thought, all things live eternally. Thus, in the essence of God are the models of all things which remain for ever without degenerating. Whereas in this material world, made for our senses, we have only, as it were, the signs and emblems of real things. Now these signs and emblems pass with time, but the perfections of the Creator are everlastingly the same.”‡ “Seek whatever you wish,” says St. Augustin, “nevertheless you will find nothing dearer, nothing

---

\* Gouget Bibliotheq. Française, tom. xvi. 113.

† Meditationes Vitæ Christi, c. xxi.

‡ Institutio Spiritualis, cap. viii.

better than Him who made all things: seek him who made, and in him and from him you will have all things.”\* “Observe,” says the holy Eucher in a letter to Valerian, “that what I say here is entirely in accordance with that attachment which we all have for life. Yes, it is in the interest of this love of life that I speak to you now on the part of God: for if you find such sweetness in it, all miserable and rapid as is this life which passes, ought you not to feel far more attached to that which will be eternally happy? ought you not to desire to perpetuate that which gives you so much pleasure, to add a thousand new charms to a state which is already so agreeable to you? in a word, to render infinite and immortal this imperfect and transitory happiness, which, notwithstanding its deficiency, appears still worthy of all your affection?” We see, therefore, how the saints were disposed to enjoy and to sanction that present possession of the riches of the visible nature, which was promised from the mountain. It seemed to them as highly useful in the two first of the three conditions of the internal life, in correspondence to which the holy church proposed the recital of the gradual Psalms, on which foundation the great Bellarmin composed his book *De ascensione mentis in Deum*, which Cardinal Bona said should be read by all those who desire to understand the invisible things of God, by those which are made, and who greatly wish not so much to know as to use the mystic steps of spiritual ascension, for whom what serves to the ruin of others becomes an instrument of elevation, to whom the aspect of creatures is a ladder of ascent, not a stumbling-block of offence.† It seems then as if this seat of earth were to them like heaven; as if angels might repose there or wander with delight and love to haunt her sacred shades; their days are only a constant ecstasy, their soul a song of praise. These are the meditative souls described by the poet, whom solitude and contemplation elevate irresistibly towards ideas of infinity, that is, towards religion: all whose thoughts turn to enthusiasm and prayer; whose whole existence is a mute hymn to the Deity and to hope; who seek in themselves and in the creation which surrounds them steps on which they may ascend to God, expressions and images to reveal him to themselves, and to reveal themselves to him,‡ because God is clearer seen by reflection in his creatures than in his essence, as the sun in the morning was seen first by the Sidonian servant who looked towards the west when he beheld its light shining upon the mountains. Profound and astonishing are the meditations of holy men respecting the love with which these sanctified creatures may be regarded by a meek and faithful soul, living in deep discernment of goodness celestial, whose broad signature is on the universe. For “what is paradise?” asks the author of *Theologia Germanica*, “Paradise is whatever exists: for whatever exists is good and delightful and agreeable to God. Therefore also it exists and may rightly be called paradise. Paradise is also said to be a vestibule or a suburb of the celestial kingdom. Thus also every thing that exists may well be called a suburb of eternity. For creatures are a demonstration and a way which leads to God and to eternity. So all things

---

\* Tract. in Ps. xxxiv.

† De Divina Psalmodia, 289.

‡ De Lamartine *Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses*, tom. i.

are a vestibule and suburb of eternity, and therefore may deservedly be styled paradise. In this paradise all things are allowed to man excepting the fruit of one tree, and that is self-will, or the willing of any thing contrary to the eternal will.”\* Here arises a question. Since all things ought to be loved, ought sin to be loved? The answer is, that it ought not: for when it is said “all things,” good is understood; for all that exists is good inasmuch as it exists. The Devil, as far as he exists, is good. In this respect, there is no such thing as evil, or what is not good. But sin is to wish, to desire, or to love something contrary to God, and to wish this is not to exist, therefore it is not good. In brief, nothing is good unless inasmuch as it is in God; but all things, as far as they exist, are in God, and indeed much more than in themselves; therefore all things, as far as they exist, are good. If there were any thing which was not in essence in God it would not be good; and to wish and desire any thing which is against God is not in God, for God cannot wish or desire any thing against God or otherwise than God, therefore that is evil and not good, and also clearly it does not exist.”† Let us remark here, that in this manner the desolations introduced by heresy were unable to disturb the possessions of the meek; for all that existed in heresy was good and catholic; its negations corresponding with all evil, did not exist, for they were against God; but all that remained could have been used by Catholics and was used by them: heresy therefore is truly nothing, excepting in the form of speech. St. Anselm pursues the same argument. “Sin and evil,” he says, “are said to be nothing; for God made all things, and all things made subsist, and all substance is good in itself. Therefore, what is called evil is nothing but the absence of good; heresy is nothing but the absence of Catholicism, as blindness is the want of sight, and darkness the absence of light.”‡

This restored harmony between the soul of man and nature, is one of the mysteries of the Catholic religion, respecting which Baader makes divine reflections. “When God the original and positive centre of man dwelt within him, man knew centrally all nature; but since through sin nature has been transposed and materialized, deprived of its primitive spirituality, and that God dwells in man only in an external manner, man no longer knows things centrally but views them from aside, and from a part of the circumference.” The effect of faith and meekness consequent upon it, is to restore man to his centre, and to reconcile him with the universal order; for as St. Thomas says of light, that it meets with nothing contrary to it in nature, since darkness is only the absence of it in places to which it has not penetrated, so in nature there is no opposition to God, nor to the will of those who are united to him. The saints, therefore, have a devout love for nature, because it is in the divine order; and they have a human affection for it, because, as Frederick Schlegel says, they can at present perceive in it certain indications, as it were, pointings and winks, which it is impossible to overlook, denoting a sympathy with the desires and hopes of their own hearts. In general nature is only the silent echo and earthly

\* *Theologia Germanica*, cap. xlvii.

† *S. Anselmi Epist.* lib. ii. 8. *Elucidarii.* lib. ii.

‡ *Id.* cap. xlv.



repetition of the divine revelation; and yet it is not without ground and meaning, when it is said in allusion to the great day of universal deliverance, that nature like a groaning creature sighs for it with an unutterable longing.\* “Do the elements perceive God?” asks the disciple in the dialogue *Elucidarium*, ascribed to St. Anselm, to whom the master replies, “God never made any thing which was insensible. For things that are inanimate to us indeed are insensible and dead, but to God all things live and all things perceive their Creator.”† Not without reason then may it be affirmed that the meek of faithful ages loved and possessed the joys of nature in all her variety of creatures, of hours, and of seasons. Truly to their perfect spirits sweet was the breath of morn; sweet her rising, with charm of earliest birds; pleasant the sun

“When first on this delightful land he spread  
His orient beams; on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,  
Glistening with dew:”

to them, indeed, the heavens were a ceaseless hymn, and each hour was a morning. The tribe of lowly ones may have left for the silent cloister, raftered halls of state, and the paths to the forest glade where knights were wont to hold their tournaments, yet not the more ceased they to wander where the muses haunt, clear spring or shady grove, or sunny hill, smit with the love of sacred song. It is related in an ancient life of St. Maur, from an old manuscript, that St. Babolein, the first abbot of the abbey des Fossés used to recite the Psalms every night on certain great stones in the river Marne.‡ Such was his employment all through the night, while Philomela wept, and renewed her piteous song from bough to bough. Peter the venerable mentions too, a certain holy Carthusian monk, who used often to spend the night in the open air in order to contemplate the sky and the works of the Creator.¶ Daniel’s fountain near Malmesbury, was so called from the holy Bishop Daniel, who was fond of spending whole nights at its side while singing the praise of God. Gervais, the excellent Archbishop of Rheims, a holy, learned, and prudent prelate, had so loved forest wanderings in his youth, that he placed before the gate of his palace a brazen stag, with an inscription, stating that he did so, in order to be reminded of his native woods. They loved the clear fountains, and the asphodel meadow, and the countless forms and tones of that admirable nature which each returning spring seemed more fair than ever; it filled their eyes with pleasant tears to trace the goodness of their God in these his lower works, and they no longer wondered that the Samaritan woman should have recognised, and confessed the Messiah at the fountain whom the Jewish people knew not in the temple.§ What a deep sense of the loveliness of this beautiful earth is shown by the Capuchin friar Lombez, where he reproves the complaints of earthly sadness, and traces expressions of horror for the world to a root of dangerous melancholy.¶ “If,” saith he, “amidst so many riches and beauties we are in a hard exile, as we are in fact, the dignity of our souls must be very

\* Philosophie der Leben, 93.

† Lebeuf, *Hist. du Diocèse de Paris*, tom. v. 161.

‡ S. Petri Ven. de *Miraculis*, lib. ii. c. 29.

¶ *Traité de la joie de l’ame*.

† Lib. i. cap. 5.

§ S. Hieronym. *Epist.* xcvi.

great, and our true country wondrous fair, and the love of God for us surpassing all conception, since he banishes us to such an admirable world, a place so adorned with all kinds of loveliness.”\* Even the austere Carthusian order, bred in the ancient forest, the deep stable of wild beasts, rejects not the possession of nature’s softer beauties. Witness Calci’s holy pile, with its lovely cloister, and its separate gardens, so fair and odoriferous with orange trees and every sweet flower, with its enchanting groves of olives clothing those surrounding Apennines, which are seen through long vistas of arches. The Hexameron of St. Basil, a kind of course on natural history, was preached during the fast of Lent both morning and evening; the scientific part is defective, but one of the greatest modern writers admits that the details are charming. The history of plants and animals gives rise to moral instructions, a common practice of the middle ages, as when those cones of the pine which cover the mountain side, composed of a multitude of grains which are kept in close union by a resinous cement, are said by father Elzear of Archer to be an emblem of religion which consists in the union of many persons connected by charity; or as when father Diego de Stella compares the pleasures of the world to those reeds which when they shoot out first in the spring of the year, do with their fresh green colour delight the eyes for a while, but if you do break them, and look within them, you shall find nothing there but emptiness and hollowness; or again, as when Dante compares the dropping away of earthly pleasures to the fall of the light autumnal leaves,

“One still another following, till the bough,  
Strews all its honours on the earth beneath;”

or as when Albert the Great shows in his eighth book on animals, that in their instinct we should recognise the divine wisdom, since in whatever degree possessed by some, it is still but the universal instinct, and not greater in one than in another, excepting that it may be more developed in some by certain circumstances. All creatures were objects of their love, so that even the authors of fable conceive a case of one who condemned himself to a voluntary penance for having killed a faithful dog. The multitude of dogs without masters which are found in Lisbon, is attributed to the sensitiveness of the Portuguese, and their unwillingness to deprive any animal unnecessarily of life.†

Monteil, in describing the virtue of the French curates, takes care to show that one point of their charge to rustics and peasants was to be kind to their animals.‡ He quotes one question in an ancient tract *De Institutione Confessorum*, from the chapter concerning husbandmen and rustics, in which the demand occurs “*si boves nimis fatigavit unde destruantur.*” “The sorrows of beasts,” says Frederick Schlegel, and he expresses but the sentiments of men in the ages of faith, “are certainly a theme for the meditation of men, and I could not agree to the justice of regarding it as a subject unworthy of reflection, or of permitting sympathy with them to be banished from the human breast.”|| And yet to plead in behalf of that sympathy would now be often considered as indication of a weak or defective intelligence; and rather

\* *Traité de la joie de l'ame*, chap. viii.

† *Hist. des Français*, tom. iii. 384.

‡ *Letters on Portugal to Orosius*, ii.

|| *Philosophie des Lebans*.

would he seem of sound and perfect nature who would be willing to partake of that amusement of the Roman epicures which Seneca describes, of watching the mullet expiring in the channel on the table, in order to observe how its golden and red colours faded, so alive are men to every barbarous joy! The notion of religion as compatible with natural savage cruelty and hardness of heart was unknown in the middle ages. St. Pius V. prohibited the bull-fights as inconsistent with piety.

The monk Frodoard, speaking of St. Remi, in his History of the Church of Rheims, says, that "his sanctity moved not only rational creatures but even tamed those that are without reason, and that one day as he was giving a familiar repast to some intimate friends and rejoicing to see them happy, some sparrows came down and began to eat crumbs out of his hand;"\* he relates also that St. Basle, who lived as an anchorite on the mountain near Rheims, having saved a poor beast that had fled from the forest, pursued by a hunter whose dogs seemed to forget all their ferocity on approaching his little cell, it used to be remarked by all hunters in that forest ever afterwards that any beast who could gain the heights in that forest was safe, for that then the dogs would lose their ardour and the hunters their courage.† St. Meinrad, the hermit of Einsiedelin, in the ninth century, after the example of St. John the apostle of charity, had tamed two ravens which showed their fidelity at his death, by pursuing his murderers to Zurich with horrible cries, which led to their detection.‡ The same affection for animals is expressly ascribed to St. Anselm, St. Francis, and many other great servants of God. St. Francis used often to say his canonical hours with the birds, near their leafy houses. St. Bonaventura describes the rapturous joys of contemplative devotion by a divine irradiation in the mind as exerting an influence even externally upon the body, and filling the soul with a desire to embrace every creature of God, sometimes impelling the body to motion, and at others to rest from excess of sweetness. Then whatever the mind beholds it considers it as abounding with a certain divine sweetness.§ The master of the sentences declares it to have been the opinion of the holy fathers, that no creature would have been poisonous, or hurtful to man if he had not sinned.¶ In the ages of faith men believed that the friends of God would be protected from the evil which nature had contracted; they evinced an affection even for inanimate creatures which were not excluded from the sphere of their benevolence. St. Severinus repented having uttered an imprecation on the tree whose branches had wounded him as he hastened to serve a church, and alighting from his horse, he prostrated himself at its roots and besought God to spare it. St. Gregory of Tours, says, that this noble saint used to gather flowers in the season when lilies unfolded their beauteous forms, and that he used to fasten them on the walls of his church.¶ On the external walls of churches, these humble plants were carved in stone, as we read of Melrose.

\* Lib. i. cap. xii.

† Tschudi Einsiedlische Chronik.

§ Petr. Lombard. Sentent. lib. ii. Distinct. 15.

† Id. lib. ii. cap. 3.

¶ Stimul. Divini Amoris, pars iii. cap. 6.

¶ De Gloria Confessorum, 50.



"Spreading herbs and flowerets bright,  
Glistened with the dew of night;  
Nor herb, nor floweret glistened there,  
But was carved in the cloister arches as fair."

The holy vestments used in the abbey of Lindisfarne were adorned with figures of the wild animals that lived upon the neighbouring shore. Books of hours used to contain lessons in agriculture attached to the calendar; these appear in the *Heures de Rouen* in gothic letters and in many others. The miniatures of the ecclesiastical calendar represented the rural labours of each season, which are also sculptured along with the signs of the zodiac on the front of the cathedral of Cremona, built in 1274: and on the brazen gates of Loretto, the rustic youth beholds an image of his own occupations in the noble figure of Adam, breaking the ground in pursuance of the primal sentence. Nor was it only in speculation that nature was enjoyed; the undertakings of men in the middle ages, in favour of material interests, were as arduous as our own, though generally for a nobler end. Dante does not disdain to borrow a similitude from the Flemings, "and their mound, 'twixt Ghent and Bruges to chase back the ocean, fearing his tumultuous tide that drives towards them, and from the Paduans and theirs along the Brenta to defend their towns and castles, ere the genial warmth be felt on Chiarentana's top." But mightier tasks than these were accomplished by the Teutonic order in Prussia, of which the greatest was the Cyclopiæ bank of the grand master Meinhard, in the thirteenth century, between Elbing and Marienburg, to prevent the inundations caused by the Nogat and the Weichsel, by means of which a vast portion of land was reclaimed and made subservient to human wants. During six years thousands of men and thousands of waggons were employed day after day till 1294, when the amazing work was finished. The wanderer in our day stands rivetted with astonishment at the spectacle, and admits that the name of Meinhard must be immortal. "His magnificent works proclaim how excellent he was," says the old chronicle, "for he dared to undertake a thing which other men would not have had courage to imagine."\* In ages when the ideal of justice was believed to be St. Louis seated after hearing mass at the foot of an oak in the forest of Vincennes, making his friends sit around him, and then giving audience to all who had business to transact with him, it is not strange that independent of motives of public economy the beauties and interests of nature should have become even an object of legislative care. The wisdom of the middle ages provided by a multitude of minute statutes and practices for the preservation of forests and secured their perpetuity. To protect the celebrated pine forest near Ravenna, many sovereign pontiffs issued briefs, testifying the utmost watchfulness in its regard; as in the Virgilian line alluding to the provision of the early Roman laws,† the woods were deemed worthy of consular solicitude. The simple manners which prevailed among all classes of society kept men familiar too with the humble charms of the animal world. The δῆς ὑπερβόρς was a personage belonging to our Christian annals. The blessed confessor Paschalis, when a youth, tended the flocks in the fields, and

\* Voigt, iv. 34.

† Petrus Crinitus de Honest. Discuss. iv.

he ever loved that kind of life, as being favourable to the exercise of humility and the preservation of innocence. The occupations of agriculture form part of the work entitled the innocent pleasures by Platina of Rome. The sons of kings used to be familiar with their flocks upon the mountains, beauteous with wild flowers, as the Pass of Storek and the Leibern See, which looks on Engelberg's holy pile. Charlemagne, every morning after mass, used to pass in review the poultry of the lower court. We read of many nobles in the middle ages who believed, as Poggius says, that a country life and the woods, conduce more to the attainment of nobility than cities, and who would have approved of no passage in Cicero's Orations more than that in which he asks, "What cupidity could be in Roscius, who always lived in the country, and was occupied in agriculture,—a life greatly removed from cupidity, and connected with duty."\* Men were then subjects, but not citizens,—a term which the modern sophists have adopted, without troubling themselves to reflect upon its meaning. In the heathen time, city-states really existed, as in the Athenian and every similar democracy, where each citizen was in some way settled in the city, and had the right of possessing a house there. Even in Homer's time, every thing that concerned the government of a state was connected with the city, and the military families and the nobles dwelt in it.† Hence, it is viewed in Homer as a disgrace or a misfortune for a noble to live among the bondsmen in the country, which was abandoned to labourers of the soil. Hence the distinction between the term an Athenian and inhabitant of Attica. Even Plato used the former as a more honourable appellation than the latter, though Müller remarks, that even in Athens, there was among the people a constant struggle of feeling between the turbulent working of the democracy and the peaceful inclination to their ancient country life. The Christian state left men free to choose the latter, which religion sanctified, and the term of citizen could thenceforth only be applied in its natural and classical signification, to denote those who had a corporal residence in cities.‡ The country was no longer left exclusively to the rustic labourers: the priests of holy Church spread themselves over it; the nobles were attached to their ancient forest life; and we read of many who in youth, or in seasons of recollection, from a desire of greater innocence, would have deigned, like Apollo, to dwell beneath the roof of Admetus, mixing with his menial train, driving along his flocks, whether they roved through the winding valley or rested in the upland grove. So clear and powerful is Nature's voice, that even Socrates, after all his arguments to prove the superiority of the city to the country, was no sooner seated peaceably in the cool shade of the plane-tree, on the banks of the Ilissus, than he confessed that he felt the sweet influence of that retreat. "O dear Phædrus," he exclaims, "do I seem to you, as to myself, to be experiencing a divine impression?" and his companion replies, "Truly, O Socrates, contrary to custom, a certain flow of eloquence seems to have borne you away." And he resumes,—“Hear me then in silence; for in fact this place seems to be divine.”|| This loving familiarity with nature was inseparable from men in

\* Pro C. Roscio, Amer.

† Od. xxiv. 414.

‡ An instance is cited by Voigt, *Geschichte Preussens*. iii. 484. || Plato, Phædrus.

whose hearts resided so deep a tone of the eternal melodies; but so also was the conviction which experience had given to St. Augustin, that it was not nature alone, or the beauties and delights of earth, that could ever satisfy the soul of man: "that which it seeks is the true and supreme joy, which, as St. Bernard says, is derived, not from the creature but from the Creator; which, when received, no one can take from it; to which, in comparison, all gladness is affliction, all tranquillity pain, all sweetness bitterness, all that can delight, vexation." The pretended revelations of nature, independent of that tradition by which society exists, are but the empty boast of a vain philosophy. Left in the presence of nature alone, uninformed and unsanctified, man degenerates rapidly into a savage state. Without religious worship, which is the realizing of the abstract idea of the divinity, that idea would soon be effaced from his thoughts; and, as Lord Bacon says, "No light of nature extendeth to declare the will and true worship of God.\*" However conducive to the physical enjoyments of man, experience shows that a life in the country, without the constant resources of the Catholic religion and its rites, becomes in the end completely a Pagan life, natural in its motives as well as in its pursuits and pleasures. Without an altar, not the shade of the lofty groves, not the soft meadows, not the stream descending from the rocks, and clearer than crystal, winding through the plain, can sanctify the soul of man. Left in the presence of nature alone, it faints and becomes like earth without the dew of heaven; it is oppressed by the contemplation of that vast immensity; it loses its tranquillity and its joy. Man in himself can find no rest or peace; and how should he find repose in the works of nature, when these are themselves for ever restless? The fire mounts in a perpetual course, always flickering and impatient; the air is agitated with conflicting winds, and susceptible of the least impulse; the water hurries on, and knows no peace; and even this ponderous and solid earth, with its rocks and mountains, endures an unceasing process of degradation, and is ever on the change. Besides, how should spirits of human kind find content in nature, when, as the Stagyrte proclaims, nature is in most things only the slave of man?"† But in his Creator has the creature present rest, and in the pledge of grace revealed supernaturally from on high, has he eternal peace, immortal felicity. We must leave the laurels, and the fountains, and the swans, and all the harmonies which resound along the margin of rivers, and we must enter the streets with the multitude, in quest of that temple of peace where the Lamb of God is offered up for sinners. Abandoned to nature, the man who is endowed with a delicate and sentimental soul, is found to breathe only the vague desires of the modern poet, whose ideal may be seen in that Burns, of whom we read that "he has no religion; his heart indeed is alive with a trembling adoration, but there is no temple in his understanding: he lives in darkness and in the shadow of doubt: his religion at best is an anxious wish—like that of Rabelais, a great Perhaps."‡ The error of the modern poets consists in their not viewing the visible world in union with the mysteries of faith, and in supposing that a mere description of

---

\* Advancement of Learning.

‡ Edinburgh Review, 1828.

† Aristot. *Metaphysic. Lib. i. 2.*



its external form can satisfy even the thirst after poetic beauty, which is inherent in our nature. Dante is blamed by them for mixing scholastic theology with his song; but it is precisely this very mixture which gives that charm to it which attracts and captivates the thoughtful heart. The same error is committed with regard to life; and while spirituality and faith, with all their beauteous expressions and sublime affecting symbols, have been effaced, instead of increasing, proud and sensual men have forfeited the possession of the present good. The earth is infected by its inhabitants and its joy is passed away. Observe the character of those cantons of Switzerland where the Catholic religion is unfelt, and men are left in presence of nature alone, without an object or a sound to recall the images of faith. What overpowering melancholy reigns in those valleys, notwithstanding all that dressing, fattening, harrowing, and distillation of the earth, in hopes of gain! What a silence is there, excepting when interrupted by the fall of avalanches, the roar of torrents, and the eternal sighing of the winds! What a moral blight has attended the political demarcation of the territory! There are indeed, here and there, some immense enterprises for the sake of profit and pleasure, some unsightly buildings, the fruit of careful speculations to afford luxury and ease to the distempered inhabitants of licentious cities, who come here in the summer season, in hopes of enjoying some vague dream of Arcadian life, united with the solid advantages of the Epicurean form: but no where do you see the beautiful chapel or the venerable cross; no where any thing to realize a tender or a sublime idea; no sacred sentences, no devout image, to exalt men to the spiritual life. You pass as on the borders of those Berne Lakes, whole villages without a church; and upon the sloping lawns you can only hope to find some ruins of a convent, or the tower of some ancient church, which you will find converted into a barn or a magazine. Yet even amidst the devastated valleys, covered with sand and rocks and the bare trunks of broken pines, ploughed up with the rains and burnt by the fire of the summer's day, which now present that pale and horrid aspect of a fearful nakedness, the Catholic religion would have planted her peaceful and her beauteous trophies. That religion has left the stamp of her genius and the imperishable monuments of her faith in the deserts of the East, and on the wildest rock of Alps or Pyrenees, amidst the lions under the fires of the tropic, as well as amidst the bears and icebergs of the pole. Where is there a garden of more rich and beauteous variety than in the very valleys surrounding the tracks over which heresy has passed? Even to the mere poetic soul, what a delightful accompaniment to the silent hymn of nature is that chiming of angelic bells which rises at evening and at noon, and at the sweet hour of prime, from all sides of a Catholic valley?—bells that may well be termed of the angel, that are not rung, as in other lands, by base hands, through love of sordid gain, to celebrate some occasion of sensual joy, temporal and vain, soon to change to mourning as vain, but by pious hands, through the devout intention of inspiring men with thoughts of prayer. How inspiring is it to hear the great bells of the abbey of Engelberg at the fourth hour of the morning, awakening the echoes, amidst the rocks and eternal snows of Titlis, and piercing the vast forests of the surrounding Alp! What consolation to the weary pilgrim, when

stopping to shelter from the storm under some covered bank which charity has erected by the mountain's side, he beholds, even there, some poor prints, representing in successive stages, the sacred passion of our Lord, and dictating some seraphic aspiration! How sweet and cheering,—and in a philosophic point of view, how important,—is all this, and how it cherishes and strengthens our young affections! But as the swimmer in the blue flood of the arrowy Rhone sees the pale line of snow-fed waters issuing from the devastated bed of the Arve, and no sooner plies his right arm to be borne up that new channel, and enters its sullen wave, than instantly a sudden cold and deathlike chill strikes through his whole body; so is the full glow of youthful devotion checked and chilled when we pass from Sarnen to the Scheidek, or from Soleure and Freyburg to the shores of the Lemman Lake. Protestantism knows no neighbourhood: it goes on repeating its old and barbarous invectives, like those sullen waters of the Arve, which pass down with the Rhone in the same channel without blending into it, without losing their chilling aspect or acquiring the least portion of its warmth or of its purity. And would you know how the loss of the joys of the Catholic faith is felt by those of the moderns themselves, who seem to have a finer and more spiritual nature? Hear these lines, that are enough to make the blood weep from one's heart:—

“Alas! our young affections run to waste,  
Or water but the desert; whence arise  
The weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste  
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes;  
Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,  
And trees whose gems are poison; such the plants  
Which spring beneath her steps as passion flies  
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants  
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants.” \*

The ancients tried all the means which imagination could propose or wealth and power execute, in order to enjoy Nature, and avail themselves of her possession. The Emperor Adrian, after visiting the provinces of his empire, wished to concentrate, at his country villa of Tivoli, whatever had most struck his attention. There he built the Lyceum, the Academy, the Prytanea, as they were at Athens. There he formed the valley of Tempe, like that in Thessaly; there he constructed the Canope, like that near Alexandria. All this was not sufficient: he conceived the design of representing there the Elysian fields: but at this stage he was attacked by the mortal illness of which he died at Baia. The poor insatiate moderns too, in vain attempt to satisfy themselves with the beauty of parks, and the imitation of nature, in lakes and gardens, interspersed with objects of heathen art and the plants of eastern clime, the cypress and her spire:—

“——Show the plants divine and strange  
That every hour their blossoms change,  
Ten thousand lovely hues!  
With budding, fading, faded flowers,  
They stand the wonder of the bowers  
From morn to evening dews.”

---

\* Byron.

Then comes the complaint of Gilbert, lamenting that the hopes of genius, the joy and triumph of nature, should be at an end. "Unhappy guest at the banquet of life, I appear for one day and die! I die: and on my grave no one will scatter flowers. Farewell, fields that I love! and thou, sweet verdure! and thou, smiling solitude of woods! Sky, beauteous canopy for man! admirable Nature! for the last time farewell!"\* And even before they learn to contemplate this separation, after all their pains, there is, even amidst these beauteous bowers, the

"Something still that prompts the eternal sigh!"

For, even to the mere poetic imagination, nature alone cannot suffice; and in Paradise itself, man could not be happy if God or his angels did not visit him. They look around from their fairy halls, and inhale the ambrosial aspect; but do they not sometimes lament that, when evening sinks o'er the earth, so beautiful and soft, there sounds no deep bell in the distant tower, no faint dying-day hymns steal aloft from cloistered cells, to make the forest leaves seem stirred with prayer? Their own poet represents his hunter looking from the steep promontory upon the lake, and exclaiming, "What a scene were here, could we but see the turrets of a convent gray on yonder meadow!"—

"For when the midnight moon should lave  
Her forehead in the silver wave,  
How solemn on the ear would come  
The holy matin's distant hum:  
While the deep peal's commanding tone  
Should wake in yonder islet lone  
A sainted hermit from his cell,  
To drop a bead with every knell."

Sweet is the breath of morning: but when so sweet as during those early walks between paintings of the sacred Passion, to the first mass of the Capuchins, whose convent crowns the towering rock, or is embosomed in the odoriferous grove?

The youth of green savannahs spake  
And many an endless, endless lake,  
With all its fairy crowds  
Of islands, that together lie,  
As quietly as spots of sky  
Among the evening clouds."

Lovely is this painting of your Wordsworth, but would it acquire no fresh charm from thinking of those convents, which might cover them, as in those islands of the Adriatic gulf, seen from the towers of Venice, and from the music of those bells, which would sound along its shore, for the angelus or the benediction? might not the vesper hymn suggest a sweeter image than occurs in the Virgilian line, which speaks of the hour in which begins the first rest of wretched mortals?† Contemplate again the seasons of the year; see what a charm descends upon the enamelled garden, from its reference to the altar; for why, cries the tender poet, "O flowers, raise ye your full chalices to the light of morning, why in the damp shade exhale those first perfumes which the day breathes? Ah, close them still, flowers that I love; guard them for the

\* Ode, written eight days before his death.

† Æneid, ii.



incense of the holy places, for the ornament of the sanctuary. The sky inundates you with tears, the eye of the morn makes you fruitful; you are the incense of the world, which it sends up to God.\* Sweet is it to recline, composed in placid peace, upon the shady lawn, when violet and hyacinth, with rich inlay, embroider the ground, more coloured than with store of costliest emblems, and to hearken to the verse of some wild minstrel, who sings by the clear stream which flows through the meadow, on a summer's day; but sweeter still to hear the litanies and hymns of holy church rise from the midst of waving corn, when her annual rogations implore a blessing on the first fruits of the earth, and when the cross and banner of her bright processions glitter through the darksome foliage.† Nor are thy reviving sports, innocent and playful youth, insensible to the universal influence of the church's season. Well I know how dear to the bold swimmer is the plunge into the clear blue flood of the impetuous Rhone, which hurries him along amidst froth and waves, sporting as in a bed of waters, or the fall from those projecting rocks, which stand at the entrance of the Gulf of Lecco, under that noble promontory on which stood the *Tragædia* of Pliny; but there is to him even a sweeter moment, when winter first departs, and he hastens to the remembered pool, along the embowered banks of the bright stream which first hears the sweet bird that harbingers the spring, and there gathers those budding osiers, which each returning year our mother Church puts into his hands to serve as palms, to be borne on that day of mystic triumph, when she celebrates the entrance of the Son of God into Jerusalem. These are the resources of a northern clime; but yet, methinks, even thy stately forests, noble Valencia, where innumerable old and lofty palm trees shade the shore of Alicant, would lose half their interest to the Christian eye, if their branches were not yearly thinned for that solemn festival, and sent in offering to the eternal city. In a country stripped and dismantled by the modern philosophy, one lives only in visible presence of what passes, like the leaves of the trees, or the flowers of the field; and the youthful race, which is the most susceptible of the charms of nature, like summer flies, is sought for in vain, when autumnal rains have cooled the rivers, and despoiled the bowers of their foliage. Without very extraordinary grace the progress of seasons and of years is felt by the noblest dispositions, which are the most apt for every change, with an emotion of deeper and deeper melancholy; but in a Catholic land one consorts continually with things that never die; and as one grows older, one only feels as if endowed with higher and higher privileges, which are to be crowned at length in the last supernal state, to which death is but the momentary passage.

This mutual influence of nature and faith, multiplying and expressing each other's joys, was profoundly felt by the meek possessors of the earth during the middle ages, and hence arose a number of beautiful monuments, the mouldering ruins of which still adorn our country,

---

\* De la Martine.

† The benediction of the new fruits of the earth used to be celebrated on the feast of the Ascension, that of orchards on the festival of St. James the Apostle, and that of the new grapes on the day of St. Xystus. [\*]

[\*] Martene, tom. iv.

though their origin and object may have been long forgotten. Historians record the profusion of oratories which were destroyed in England when the new religion was first established. These little chapels, embowered amidst the pale ivy or the myrtles that love the shore, were common in the days when above all things the woods were dear to men, and the divine muse was beloved everywhere, found to be sweet amidst the woods, and sweet upon the waves, combining all the fabled charms of Orpheus and Arion. Petrarch beautifully moralizes upon the fountain of Vacluse, and declares that it is his resolution to raise an altar there in the garden which hangs over the water. "It shall not," he continues, "be dedicated, like those of Seneca, to the gods of the rivers, or the nymphs of the fountains, but in honour of the Virgin Mother of that God who has destroyed the altars and demolished the temples of all other gods." The month of May was called the month of Mary, when men would devoutly repeat her office as they walked in some garden, bright with the sweet hue of eastern sapphire that was spread over the serene aspect of the pure air, at the rising of the sun, and beheld the swans majestically resting on the limpid waters. The waters too were claimed, and images of saints and hermits, and mitred fathers, were seen, stretching the hand of benediction over them, as at the Balbian promontory on the Lariun lake. The course across the Lagunes, for eighteen miles from Venice to the Camaldolese convent on the isle of St. Clement, is marked by an image of our Lady, with a lamp burning, which seems almost to touch the sea, over which it casts so far its placid beam. In the midst of the lake of Garda is a point, mentioned by Dante, where the bishops of Trent, Verona, and Brescia, would have the right of giving their benediction; and I have heard the sweet and solemn sound of litanee or sacred hymns rise from boats of pilgrims, bearing cross and holy banners, across Lugano's lake, when boat used to respond to boat while onward hastening.

Wherever a wild and broken rock projected, or a beauteous hill rose from a river's bank, there was sure to be some spot dear to piety, which scholars and poets would unite to celebrate, like that of Mount Valerian on the Seine, which forms the subject of an elegant Latin history by Briezac. As the morning sun first visits the mountain heights, so does the great and admirable sun of justice make his grace to shine first at the door of the solitary hermit, and of those who live retired upon the points of rocks. When St. Vincent of Paul was ordained priest, he repaired to a chapel situated on a mountain in the midst of a wood, near the river Tarne, and there he said his first mass. The presbytery of St. Vit of Mont-Meillan, being on the side of a hill, commanded a most beautiful view over the country. The curate, in the year 1695, thought this garden was too beautiful to be left without rendering service to religion. Accordingly he had the piety to convert it into a Calvary, with grottos and cells for prayer; so that a crowd of devout people used to come there on Sundays and festivals from the neighbouring parishes.\* Marchangy makes his traveller of the fourteenth century remark, that as he mounted the heights of Fourvières at Lyons, the view became so enchanting, that he was almost certain to find at the summit of the

---

\* Lebuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, tom. v. 544.

mountain some place of pilgrimage. "For I have remarked," he adds, "in the course of my travels that religion never fails to invite tender or suffering souls to places, whose natural beauty attests the power of the Creator."\* The fields and level shores were, indeed, associated with religious mysteries: for, that standing of Jesus by the lake of Genesareth when the multitude pressed upon him, that seeing of the two boats and the occupation of the fishermen, that walk through the corn with the disciples on the Sabbath, of which men had heard from infancy always in the same sweet season of the summer,† made such an impression, that they could never enjoy the beauties of nature, or the recreations of a country life without thinking of their blessed Redeemer; but mountains were especially dear to religion from the remembrance of that mount whose name has given an universal and beloved fame to the pale verdure of the olive, from that of Thabor, and Sinai, and Ephreim, which fed the holy Samuel. It was on mountains that God manifested himself to the Hebrews of old, and it was on them that the tremendous mysteries of human redemption were accomplished. Mountain heights, enclosing on their brown and mossy moors the spot where earliest wild flowers grow, were dear to village children, but so were they also to the eye of faith, as symbolical of a religious life; for mountains are the abodes of the most noble animals, the lion and the eagle; the source of the mightiest and purest streams; the soil congenial to the loftiest trees, the cedar and the pine; the places most secure to helpless innocence, in consequence of their distance from the haunts of men; the spots which are the first and last to enjoy the golden light of day, and which afford the farthest prospect over this world of woe.‡ During the ages of faith in reference to the holy inclosures on their summits, it might with truth be said, that the mountains distilled sweetness, and the hills flowed with milk and honey; for there was heard at many seasons of every year a voice of the multitude on the mountains, as if of a people gathering, a voice of the sound of kings and of the nations assembling. Then used each man to say joyfully to his neighbour, "Come, and let us ascend to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths; because a law hath gone forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

The blessed John of the Cross distinguishes three kinds of holy places, that is, places where God is accustomed to excite the will to devotion. The first are certain spots rendered agreeable by the extensiveness and variety of the view, by the verdure of trees and plants, by solitude and silence. The end in employing such places is to elevate the heart to God. Almost every Christian city, and even village, was adorned and consoled by some place of this kind, on which a Calvary was erected, where devout persons went at all times to pray; and where at intervals, as on the festivals of the holy cross in May and in September, the whole population would assemble then in peaceful pilgrimage, to assist at the divine offices celebrated in an adjoining chapel,

\* *Tristan*, tom. v. 333.

† Fourth Sunday after Pentecost.

‡ *Le Sacré Mont d'Olivet ou le Paradis de la Religion du Seraphique Pere St. François*, p. 10.



and to hear some man of God discourse upon the love of Jesus. Such was the Mont Valerien near the city of Paris, where hermits had resided since the eleventh century, whose sweet solitude even kings protected, for in the year 1633 there was a royal decree forbidding any one to keep a hostellerie upon that mountain nearer than the village of Surêne.\* In the house of the missionaries on the summit, it was the custom to admit laymen who desired to make retreats. The Cardinal de Noailles came there every year for that purpose, and the Cardinal Boromeo used in like manner to retire to the Calvary on Monte Varale, where were represented the mysteries of the Passion. Here were fields of roses, which embalmed the air with their sweet fragrance; and when the multitude assembled, such peace and joy beamed from every countenance, that one might have thought that the reign of universal order was already come. One of the first acts of the sophists who wrought the last revolution, was to throw down the crosses and desecrate the sanctuary, that all men might know them by their fruits. The second kind, continues the blessed Friar, are particular places, whether solitary or not, in which God is known to have had extraordinary intercourse with just men, thither sending his winged messengers on errands of supernal grace, so that these persons continue ever after attached to them, though it is not the place but the soul which draws down the grace of God. Thus Abraham raised an altar on the spot where God had appeared to him; and in passing by it on his return from Egypt, he again worshipped there; and Jacob also made an altar of stone in the place where the Lord appeared to him. Such are the famous church of the Portiuncula and the seraphic mountain of Alvernia in Italy, exhibiting those wondrously split rocks, which a pious tradition ascribes to the earthquake at the death of Christ, and clothed with that deep and solemn wood, which so often beheld the secret wanderings and heard the infinite sighs of the fervent servants of God, Francis and Anthony, where the former, while praying at day-break on its rocky side, received the stigmata which his limbs two years did carry. Such, too, is that high mountain called Cruachan Ailge, in Ireland, so memorable for having been the place where St. Patrick spent a Lent in great abstinence and solitary meditation. The places where hermits had lived or where holy men used to preach, were often called ever afterwards the holy place. Thus, in the diocese of Paris, there is a lieu-saint, so called from St. Quentin having lived there a recluse. There is another lieu-saint in the diocese of Coutances near Valogne, where holy solitaries lived under the first race of kings. In Germany there is Heiligenstad, where Dagobert I. had a vision of saints.† That tower of Ader, where St. Jerome says the angel appeared to the shepherds that were watching their flocks by night would be a place of the same order. The third kind of places are those which God has destined, by an especial choice, for his service. Such were Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb.‡ The Carmelite friar Nicholas, who describes his pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the year 1487, visited these holy mountains, to which he could travel only by night, through the midst of horrible deserts. Arriving at length within view of the con-

\* Lebeuf, *Hist. du Diocèse de Paris*, tom. vii. 129.

† Lebeuf, tom. xiii. 188.

‡ B. John of the Cross, *ascent of Mount Carmel*, lib. iii. c. 41.

vent of St. Catharine, he says that every one wept for joy. The monks received them with great charity, but the pilgrims were only disposed for prayer. After mass matins were sung, after which every one retired to rest for the remainder of the day. The pilgrims disposed themselves to visit the holy places of the mountain by confession and devout prayer. On Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb, he says, there were many holy chapels to honour the spots which are consecrated by events of the sacred history. He describes his ascent and the views from the summit, and no book of modern travels will convey the same impression of reality as this holy man's simple relation. In few words he makes you behold the two mountains of Sinai and Horeb, and the holy places and the dreadful wilderness, and the Red Sea with its desert islands and the horrible mountains of Thebaid.\* The moderns have lost the idea of holy places, and are often disposed to condemn and ridicule those who have retained it. Had they been with Moses upon Horeb, they would have imagined some figure that would dispense their making bare the feet. Let us pause a moment, therefore, to hear the sentiments of men in ages of faith respecting the origin and influence of that idea. In the first place, they needed not the discourse of Milton to teach them as a general precept,

——— "that God attributes to place  
No sanctity, if none be thither brought  
By men who there frequent, or therein dwell."†

This was a Catholic maxim, which he had gathered, as many things besides, from the writings of the olden time. St. Bernard had said, "Let no one flatter or congratulate himself respecting a place, because it is said, this place is holy, non enim locus homines, sed homines locum sanctificant;" to which words the pilgrim brother Nicholas alludes, saying, "Le canon dit, l'homme fait le saint lieu, et non le lieu fait la sainte personne."‡ "Neither do holy places," says Walafried Strabo, abbot of Fulda, "profit those who lay aside holiness, nor do horrid places injure those who are protected by the grace of God. The angels fell in heaven, whereas Moses was preserved in the waters, Daniel among the lions, and the three children in the fire."§ St. Peter the venerable, abbot of Cluni, writing to the monks of Mount Thabor, exhorting them to be especially devout and fervent, from the consideration, not only of their being Christians and monks, but also because they inhabit a holy place, desires them to remember well that a holy place can never save them.¶ "As for these places of pilgrimage, and the extraordinary graces which are vouchsafed to those who visit them," says the blessed John of the Cross, "the reason of their existence is to give occasion for more ardent fervour and opportunity for men to awaken their piety. It is for this end that miracles are wrought in those places where the faithful assemble to offer up their vows to heaven, in sight of the sacred images. Their faith in God, their confidence in his goodness, their singular devotion for the saints whom these celebrated images represent, and their continual prayers, sustained by the intercession

\* Le grant voyage de Hierusalem, Paris, 1517.

† Paradise Lost, xi.

‡ Le grant voyage à Hierusalem, f. cviii.

§ De rebus Ecclesiasticis, cap. xiii.

¶ Epist. lib. ii. 44.

of the blessed, obtain from God these extraordinary prodigies, of which the whole glory returns to the Creator. We find that these operations generally occur in places where the painting or image is some simple and common work, and where the place itself is retired and solitary, far from the haunts of men, where simplicity and faith alone are favoured, where the length and difficulty of the journey may prove the devotion of the heart, and where the solitude of the place itself may deliver the pilgrims from the noise of the world, and favour their devotion, as when our Lord withdrew to deserts and to mountains for his prayer."\* The zeal with which such places were visited by the early Christians may be learned from St. Augustin, where he says, "Brethren, recall to mind how, on any festival of the martyrs, when any holy place is named for any certain day, the crowds flow in together, to celebrate the solemnity. How they excite one another; how they encourage one another, and say, Let us go; let us go; and when it is asked whither? they reply to such a place, to such a holy place: they talk together, and as if catching fire from one another, they kindle into one flame, which impels them to that holy place which saintly meditation points out to them. Such is the holy love which makes men visit temporal places of sanctity. What then ought to be their ardour in hastening to heaven."† If men would only observe what passes within themselves with regard to human things, they might learn to understand the principle of devotion to holy places, with regard to God: for instance, they esteem one chapter of a favourite book more highly than the rest, because they remember having read it in presence of a friend who is now absent. If they have executed any work of art while conversing with him, they prize it more than all others on that account. What intense and subtle feeling connects itself with the most trifling circumstance which has any relation to the earthly affections of the heart! and so it is with those who love God in his saints. Their habits, the staff they used to bear, the chamber they used to inhabit, the rock on which they used to pray, the well from which they drank, the sepulchre where they repose, become precious and venerable and holy.

From St. Gregory of Tours we can learn the usual mode in which such places were visited, for he says, "On one occasion, as I was going about the city of Lyons to visit the holy places, the man who walked before us coming to the crypt of the blessed Heli, invited us to pray, saying, because a great priest rests in this place."‡ Cold ungrateful men may argue or condemn, but reason will admit the wisdom of a devotion which is founded in the deepest principles of our nature. Ah, why are men so undoubting and resolute to admit an excuse for omitting the memory of God; why so backward and forbidding, so full of scepticism and difficulties, when an occasion is offered of invoking him? Never can I lose the remembrance of that evening of sweet peace, when with the holy monks of Vallombrosa I went the round of all their blessed spots, sanctified by the wondrous life and blissful death of the ancient eremites of that cloister, when the narrow cell which had sheltered one, the rocky bed on which another had expired, and every other

---

\* Ascent of Mount Carmel, lib. iii. c. 35.

† Tractat. in Ps. cxxi.

‡ De gloria Confessorum, 62.



revered memorial was visited with solemn litanee or hymn to Christ's blessed mother, or offering of glory for everlasting to the triune God. Thus did we ascend that mount of Paradise, when each step they invited me, thoughtless and obdurate, to turn from nature unto nature's God. To Vallombrosa one repairs with recollections that centre upon the poetry of Milton, and from it one returns with a mind refreshed, exalted, enraptured with a sense of that supernal music which can be known fully but where day endless shines. By the erection of stations in some retired spot, in the neighbourhood of every town, the church proposed to multiply places which, by the representation of our blessed Saviour's sufferings, might move the hearts of her children to greater fervour, and serve as a perpetual instruction to the ignorant: and in connection with the great historical facts and awful mysteries of religion, these affecting memorials of piety contributed to the riches which the earth was found to yield to the meek in ages of faith. What was the idea of their institution? at Jerusalem was their original. There tradition has preserved even many circumstances of the passion, which are not related in the Gospel. The spot is shown where Mary met Jesus bearing the cross; driven away by the guards, she took another road, and was found again further on, following the Saviour. It is Chateaubriand who thus speaks: "Faith is not opposed to these traditions, which show to what a degree this wondrous and sublime history has been engraven on the memory of men. Eighteen centuries passed over, persecutions without end, unceasing revolutions, ruins piled up and still ever increasing, have not been able to efface or conceal the trace of this divine mother weeping for her son!" The Church was well aware of the impressions felt by those who visited these stations, and with her constant tender solicitude she endeavoured to provide the same for all her children. Every town and village, therefore, furnished places where, in some degree, they might be experienced by those who had a devout heart and sincere contrition. There, after the business of the day was over, when the angelus had tolled and the hour came when nature makes that awful pause and inclines the soul to meditation, the pious youth or holy matron would steal softly from the crowd and repair thither, to shed the sweet undiscovered tear on the Mount of Olives, on the spot where Pilate cried *Ecce Homo!* on the place where our Saviour sank under the cross, on that where he said unto the women, *Weep not for me, and so on the rest.* At Rome these were represented in the Colosseum, within that very inclosure where such multitudes of martyrs had followed Christ to the bitterness of his passion. On certain days the clergy, followed by a devout multitude, visited these places in procession, sung the litanee, recited prayers, and delivered a short instruction. Nor was this all. Innumerable crosses of stone or wood were erected by the public ways, in the heart of forests and amidst the wildest scenes of nature, on bridges, which heard amidst the eternal murmur of the streams, the chaunt of nocturns in the night, and on the craggy summit of islands, that lay far in the melancholy sea; that no place might be left without the symbol of human redemption, and the memorial of the passion of Jesus. Descending from the mountain of St. Bernard, under that fort of Bard, in a spot which seems made by Nature herself for the destruction of an army, and where modern art now vies with her in appalling

frowns, with what delightful surprise does one discover the peaceful images of heaven's mercy, the Madonna and the cross! Time was when England too possessed them. In the vast fens surrounding Crowland, we read of there being immense crosses placed, as on the boundaries between Holland and Kesteven, Alderlound and Goggisland.\* In the ancient groves, too, which never heard the woodman's stroke, amidst the giant trunks' projecting withered arms, like that forest which clothes the shore of Bolsena's Lake, through which the pilgrim mounts to Montefiascone, you would find the cross to sanctify the melancholy shade. Thus we read in the books of chivalrous fable, how the knight errants used to hang up their shields by the stone crosses in the forests. In poetry, as in nature, we sometimes come upon them suddenly with glad surprise. How impressive is that instance, amidst a battle-scene, in the lay of Marmion, when Clare looks round for water to slake his dying thirst as he lay wounded on the wild heath, near a stone cross:

"Where shall she turn? Behold her mark

A little fountain-cell,  
Where water, clear as diamond spark,  
In a stone basin fell;  
Above, some half-worn letters say,  
Drink, weary pilgrim, drink and pray  
For the poor soul of Sybil Gray,  
Who built this cross and well."

Frequently, too, these were memorials also of historical events, to which piety gave an immortal remembrance, as at Ravenna, near which a simple Greek cross indicates the spot where formerly stood the superb basilica of St. Lorenzo, founded in the year 396, and destroyed in the sixteenth century. King Philip, carrying the body of St. Louis, his father, from Paris to the abbey of St. Denis, wherever he halted to repose crosses were erected on the spot, which stood till the revolution. On the similar occasion of the body of queen Eleanor, wife of Edward I., being conducted from the north to Westminster, those beautiful crosses were erected, of which the ruins may still be seen at Waltham and other places. At Rievaulx Abbey, when the body of St. Wilfred had been washed, and the water then poured out upon the earth, a wooden cross was erected on the spot.

The first amongst the Christians who opposed the worship of the cross was Claudius, a Spaniard, in the ninth century, and in the same age the Paulicians, who appeared in the East. The Wickliffites called the images of the cross putrid trunks, less estimable than the trees of the wood, for the latter, said they, had life, but these were dead, a passage which shows how profoundly these first reformers could philosophize. The succeeding heretics were animated with a most invincible hatred against the crosses, so that they disappeared every where before them, while statues of kings, in the heathen style, were erected in their stead, as at Charing Cross, the demolition of which was effected amidst loud cheers from an immense multitude. Yet such was the inconsistency of these men, who mistrusted or condemned the impression produced by the representation of the cross of Christ, that some of them were heard to say, that they could never hear the loud solitary whistle

---

\* Hist. Croylandensis in Rerum Anglic. Script. tom. i. and Ingulphi Hist. p. 39.

of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild cadence of a troop of gray plover in an autumn morning, without feeling an elevation of soul, like the enthusiasm of devotion. Our forefathers, too, may have known nothing, or next to nothing, of the structure of their souls, but yet they could give a reasonable account for their attaching more importance to the impressions which they felt at the sight of a cross, than to any of the seeming caprices of their nature. "The mere sight of a crucifix is never useless to the soul," says Louis of Blois, speaking of the spiritual ascetic.\* "A Christian of orthodox faith," he says again, "can never behold the image of a crucified Redeemer, without great utility."† "The moderns are not unwilling to kiss the books of the Gospels before a judge," observes Bossuet, "and what is the cross but the whole Gospels in one sign and character contracted? What is the cross, unless the whole science of Jesus Christ crucified? Why then should we not kiss that and bow the knee to it?" Does not the very instinctive aversion with which it is regarded by all enemies to Christianity prove it to be holy? What other inference can be drawn from those late horrors in Gallic land, where the symbol of salvation was overthrown with such demoniacal ferocity, and replaced by the symbol of the revolution, by that of Atheism? The moral influence of the Christian symbol was so clearly seen by its enemies, that among the articles of capitulation to be observed by the Christians on the fall of Jerusalem, the Turks stipulated that they should place no crosses upon their churches, nor bear them or the Gospels about in procession, and that their bells should not be tolled, though they might be allowed to observe their religious rites in all the churches already built. Elsewhere, indeed, the same enactments, with the exception of the latter indulgence, were enforced by men who continued to profess a belief in Christianity; but the results proved the acuteness of the Sarassin policy, and the folly of those who, with different intentions, imitated it. By degrees, the race which had lost faith, lost also the memory of Christianity; its thoughts were wholly engrossed with business or political debates, or with delusive phantoms of sense; if it heard mention of God having come down on earth, chosen apostles, and sent them to found a religion, the impressions excited were not different from those with which it read the history of Romulus or Alexander. Now one can easily understand why, in a Catholic country, such a godless crew should feel startled and disquieted; for there men may indeed fall victims to passion, may aspire to rob or remain tangled in a net of sensual delight, but never for a single day can they forget the great and awful facts of the Christian dispensation. Faith has raised too many memorials of its history and of its mysteries for their minds, to be ever reduced to a state of nature or mere animal perception, that is left without either the consolations or the terrors of religion.

Thus, then, during ages of faith, was nature enjoyed in connection with religion, by those to whom meekness imparted the privileges of simplicity. Thus was the exterior and interior life brought into perfect harmony, so as to produce that expansion of the heart which is the real cause that makes a Catholic country so delightful to men of good will;

---

\* *Institutio Spiritual.* cap. vi.

† *Enchirid. Parvulorum*, lib. i. doc. xii. append.



for so sweet is it to them, that "they whose verse of yore the golden age recorded, and its bliss on the Parnassian mountain," may be thought to have foreseen it in a dream. The earth was adorned with beauteous monuments, and the luminous air itself seemed to diffuse sweet harmony, not alone those wild and melancholy strains of which the poet speaks as heard in Scottish land, rising from the bands of busy harvest,

"When falls before the mountaineer,  
On lowland plains, the ripen'd ear;"

but oftener, as in the neighbourhood of Rome, when peasants in the evening return from the vintage, some litaneæ or sacred hymn, for even festive songs, like those of that devout people, had in some manner still a religious burden. The author of the *Martyrs* ascribes this custom of pious ejaculations and responses by the rustic labourers to the first Christians, and traces it to the days of Ruth.\* In the time of St. Jerome, the labourers in Palestine conducting their carts, and the husbandmen in dressing their vines, used to refresh their spirits with the chaunt of Alleluia, and the presence of Christian youth was recognised by hearing the shepherds and peasants singing canticles of devotion by the side of their flocks, a scene which then recalled the primitive innocence of the pastoral life of the ancient patriarchs. The old French kings endeavoured to promote this custom by their paternal ordinances, which said, "Let all sing on the Sabbath, going to vespers, or to matins, or to mass, chaunting Kyrie Eleison; and in like manner let the herdsmen of cattle sing as they go into the fields or return to the house, ut omnes eos veraciter Christianos et devotos esse cognoscant."† Wandering among the olive groves of Fiesole, I have heard children in cottages chaunting the Kyrie Eleison, while mothers at the doors handled the distaff and the flax. The very reverence with which the humble friar and the village pastor were regarded was a source of social and serene enjoyment to the people among whom they walked. Their sweet and holy countenances were felt as a benediction, in the same manner as the entrance of the unblest feet of modern sophists is always felt as an interruption to joy, though these are the men who have the confidence to speak of applying their moral energies to the gradual extinction of Catholicism, and the consequent increase of social enjoyment, "as if," cries an excellent writer, "men who are themselves incapable of social enjoyment, their principles being a condensation of selfishness, and repugnant to all sociability, their rudeness, and even ferocity of look and manner, being sufficient to enable travellers to recognise them in any place, could increase or secure social enjoyment in others." In short, the meek felt themselves in every object that struck their senses, and at every hour of their existence, endowed with hidden riches, and in possession of an innocent and a happy earth. If they had lived more days than Abraham, they would not have had time to use this long series of sanctified pleasures and natural enjoyments which life distilled, drop by drop, sweetly, and secretly, upon their lips. Thus "through a wilderness of primy sweets that never fade, they walked in thoughtfulness, and yet expectant of beatitude more high."

---

\* Lib. ii.

† Capit. Carol. mag. 202. lib. vi.

So far we have considered the blessedness of the meek in relation to the material advantages which could be drawn from the possession of the earth. It remains to take a brief view of the more spiritual and interior riches which were attached to that inheritance, and the attempt to show in what manner it became subservient to the extension of intellectual good will be the object of our next disputation.

---

#### CHAPTER IV.

It is the object of our enterprise to discover in what manner the meek, in ages of faith, availed themselves of the intellectual treasures which the earth is capable of yielding, and for this purpose we must direct our thoughts to those spiritual and interior riches which are derived from poetry, from learning, and from friendship, for it is clear that, in one sense, these rise to mortals from the earth, and are an essential part of its inheritance. Of themselves, too plainly imperfect, and liable, as experience proves, to the most lamentable abuse, we shall find that they were ennobled, perfected, and secured by an alliance with the principles of faith, which gave purity to their object and stability to their possession. Poetry was perhaps one of the original gifts which the bountiful Creator attached to the present condition of man's life, in order to enable him to sustain the wretchedness of his exile. Philosophers observe that the sensible world, being inferior in dignity to the rational soul, poesy seems to grant that to human nature which history denies, supplying shadows in place of substance to the mind; and Lord Bacon says that if any one should examine attentively, a firm argument is derived from poesy, that there is a more illustrious and perfect order of things than can in any manner be found in Nature herself after the fall; therefore, as realities cannot satisfy the mind, poesy feigns actions more heroic; it corrects history, and therefore conferreth not only to delectation but to magnanimity.\* Pindar had remarked, that truly there are many things wonderful, and that legends adorned with varied fables lead away the minds of mortals more than a true discourse.† Yet if attention be paid to the original source of all poetic fable, there is deeper penetration shown by Homer, where he invokes the muses as divinities who alone know all things, and then adds, but we hear only rumours and know nothing:

“ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν οὐδ’ ἔτι ἴδμεν.”‡

“Fancy itself,” as Frederick Schlegel observes, “is one of the essential groundworks of consciousness. It is in its foundation nothing but memory; and what we commonly call fancy is in fact only a delirium

---

\* De Augment. Scientiæ, lib. ii. c. 13.  
VOL. II.—4

C

† Olymp. i.

‡ Il. ii. 465.

of the memory.”\* True art and all higher poetry are the beautifully adorned summit, the promising blossom, nay, the very flower of hope.† “And man,” as he says, “from childhood to youth, from youth to manhood, from manhood to death, is, above all other creatures, a being of hope.”‡ The same view is taken by Huet, in accounting for the disposition of men to love romance: “It arises,” he says, “from the faculties of the human soul, which, being too vast in capacity to be satisfied with any present object, seeks gratification from the past and the future, from truth and fiction.”§ St. Augustin had said that those fictions which are significative and emblematical are not falsehoods, but figures of truth, of which some of the wisest and most holy men have availed themselves, and we find the same doctrine well explained and diffused in the middle ages, in proof of which we may witness the words of John of Salisbury, where he says that “the lies of the poets serve truth;”§ and those of Christine de Pisan, where she says, “although in general the name of poesy be taken for some fiction, and though it is a common saying, *Les poètes mentent de moult de choses*, yet the end of poetry is truth, to advance which these feigned images are formed, enveloping the real and occult sense.”\*\*\* Indeed, such has been the universal judgment of mankind. The Persians, who had such a reverence for truth, and who regarded every species of lie with such horror, were nevertheless peculiarly fond of works of ingenious fiction, and many of their books of instruction for youth were in the form of romances. Their legislator Zoroaster employed fabulous adventures for this object. Strabo says that their masters of youth gave their precepts of morality in tales and fictions. Seneca observes that the ancient Romans made frequent use of fabulous adventures for the purposes of instruction; and Macrobius reckons works of the nature of romances among those which administered instruction with delight. In the middle ages the title *Romant* was applied to true histories, as to that of *Du Guesclin*, for it signifies any work which was written in the *langue Romane*; but it was at length applied exclusively to those works which, as Huet observes, were true in their details, and false only in their general object, which differed from many of the ancient historians only on this account, that they were false in their details, though faithful in their general outline. After all, romances in this sense had their origin in the beautiful East, and they were allied to those parables which have the highest of all sanctions. Huet supposes the Egyptians, Arabians, Persians, Indians, and Syrians, to have been the first writers of romances, and he shows that the great authors of antiquity, who composed romances, were all of oriental origin.†† Aristotle, and after him Cornutus and Priscien, mention the Libyan fables. The Arabs brought their romantic poetry into Spain; but their dominion, during the first period, so far from assisting, kept down and stifled the genius of that people, and by imposing the Arabic tongue, put off the rise of the Spanish literature, so that Italy, Provence, and even Normandy, had their poets and writers in the language of their country before Spain had pro-

\* Philosophie der Sprache, 136.

† Id. 190.

‡ Id. 125.

§ Huet, *De l'Origine des Romans*.

§ De *Nugis Curialium*, lib. ii. cap. 6.

\*\* Livre des Fais et bonnes Mœurs du sage Roi Charles V. liv. iii. chap. 68.

†† De l'Origine des Romans, 13.



duced any. A Spanish bishop complains, that while his people can write verses in Arabic, they cannot say their prayers in Latin, by which he meant the Spanish in its infant state. In the hands, however, of the ecclesiastical and chivalrous writers, the object of romance became, in the middle ages, still more under the influence of idealism and allegory. Josaphat, Percival, Arthur, Wigalois, and Tschionatulander, were mystical personifications of sanctity and knighthood. According to the doctrine of Boethius in his *Consolatio Philosophica*, the ideal was represented as a person, and the Germans are delighted to find, in the middle ages, poets of their nation who professedly pursued this object, such as Konrad of Würzburg, Peter Suchenwirt, Henry Muglin, Hadamar von Laber, Hermann of Sachsenheim, and Melchior Pfünzing.

Nothing is more easy than to collect passages condemning poetry from the writings of the holy fathers, and nothing simpler than to arrange and connect them in such a manner as to convey the idea of a final and absolute prohibition, when men have taken in hand to write a formal treatise against it, or to show the danger of its abuse: but whether Religion might avail herself of the assistance of poetry, and include that beautiful world in the promise which gave to meekness the possession of the earth, was at no time, as the lives and writings of the holy fathers prove, made a question virtually in the Christian schools; while the splendid triumph which the eighth Clement had prepared for Tasso at the capitol, left a positive and ever-memorable testimony that the love of poetry is not incompatible with supreme solicitude for the first and highest good. Repeatedly, during the ages of faith, the holy bishops of the Church, by their instructions and by their examples, sanctioned its diffusion, and allowed men to mix serious things with trifles, and false with true, "in order," as John of Salisbury says, "that all things might be referred expressly to the worship of the highest truth."\* So that, as at the beleaguered city sung by Æschylus, at whose seventh gate royal Apollo took his awful stand,† the purified and innocent Muse was permitted to appear as the champion on one side of the city of the church, that city which is besieged at all times by proud and deluded men. Celebrated was the ingenuity evinced by the Christian pastors in the time of Julian, when they contrived to elude the decree of that emperor, who sought to deprive their youth of the advantages of an acquaintance with the great poets of antiquity. The Greek tragedy entitled the Passion of Christ, composed of verses taken from Sophocles and Euripides, whose chorusses were converted into Christian hymns, is said to have been formed by St. Gregory Nazianzen on this occasion, when the Christians were forbidden to study the original classical writings. This tragedy has been lately consulted with success, in order to correct the present texts of Euripides. Not without surprise will some hear mention of a German nun, Hroswithe, in the eleventh century, who, merely through a sense of the beauties of the classical writers, adopted a similar expedient, and composed Latin dramatic pieces upon Christian subjects, in a style well imitated from that of Terence. Christianity has always had its poets, under the white robes of the Apollinares in the first age, as under the episcopal mantle of Fenelon after the lapse of eighteen cen-

---

\* De Nugis Curialium, in lib. vii. Prolog.

† Æschyl. Sept. cont. Theb.

turies. Ecclesiastical history makes frequent mention of bishops, like Sidonius in the fifth age, who cultivated the Muse, and associated it with their apostolical labours, not disdaining to hearken sometimes to the ancient classic bards, but as Dante, when he followed the souls of Statius and Virgil,

“Listening that speech, which to their thoughts convey’d  
Mysterious lessons of sweet poesy.”\*

St. Cyprian of Carthage, Pope St. Damasus I., Paulinus Bishop of Nola, Victorinus, Fortunatus, and Hilary of Poitiers, Prosper of Aquitaine, and St. Avitus, Archbishop of Vienne, are illustrious examples; to which may be added priests not invested with the episcopal character, as Tertullian of Carthage, Lactantius Juvenus of Spain, Cælius Sedulius of Ireland, Arator of Rome, and Claudian Mamertus of Vienne.† The subjects chosen by Paulinus are the death of the son of Celsus, the turbulent condition of his own times and trust in God, the ancient festivals of the church, newness of life, and the creation of man. Many of the little pieces of St. Fortunatus were addressed to St. Radegonde or to St. Agnes. One was “on some violets,” another “on some flowers which were placed on the altar.” He composed many fine sacred hymns, among which the *Vexilla Regis* has been adopted by the Church. The oldest monument of German literature is an epic poem relating the slaughter of Roncevalles composed by a priest Conrad. The romances of Barlaam and Josaphat, published in the thirteenth century, by Rudolf of Montfort, had been composed by St. John Damascenus; it treats of the love of God and the heroism of the martyrs. It was greatly admired by the Christians of Egypt, being translated into the Coptic tongue. Eustathius, Bishop of Thessalonica, about the middle of the twelfth century, was said to have composed a romance, though it was one unworthy of his genius. The Count of Stolberg might have appealed to the authority of Huet, who also is inclined to disbelieve the report of Nicephorus that Heliodorus had been deposed by a council for having composed the adventures of Theagenes and Chariclea, and the latter grounds his argument on the purity and virtue of the work itself.‡ That learned and holy prelate, Camus, Bishop of Belley, as well as the great St. Francis de Sales, spoke in terms of high admiration of the romance of *Astrea*. Fenelon may be said to have composed both a poem and a romance in the adventures of *Telemachus*, as also *Æneas Silvius* before succeeding to the apostolic chair, though in one of his letters this learned Pope expresses bitter regret for having left such a production among his works. Octavien de Saint Gelais, Bishop of Angoulême, was regarded as one of the greatest poets of his time. He saw the reigns of Charles VIII., Louis XII., and Francis I. He gave translations of the Greek and Latin poets, of the whole *Æneid*, and of many books of the *Odyssey*, yet, from the tone of some of his early poems, perhaps Dante would have found him in the number of those who wept. On being invested with the episcopal character, he indeed abandoned all former amusements, and gave himself up wholly to the study of holy things, and to the service of the church, but still on the

\* Purg. xxii.

† Fabricius, *Poetarum Vet. Eccles. Opera*.

‡ De l'Origine des Romans, 70.

death of King Charles VIII. whose body he followed to St. Denis, he testified his regrets in many verses which were afterwards published in the Vergier d'Honneur. Our great St. Dunstan was both a poet and musician, whose works no purifying flame need have feared, and the Scottish minstrel who has sung the Lady of the Lake alludes to the harp which erst Saint Modan sway'd.\* St. Aldhelm, Bishop of Shireburn, cultivated poetry with such success even in his native tongue, that it was said no one could equal him in the composition of English verses. Eldred mentions a certain poem of his which the common people continued to sing; for when this blessed man led a hermit's life in the woods of Malmesbury, he used often to station himself after mass on a certain bridge over which the people returned from the town, and there he used to stop them, endeavouring to correct and reform those semi-barbarous rustics by the melody of his verses. He composed at various times a multitude of poems and other works, and he expressly wrote on the rules of versification. To convey an idea of the interest which poets in the middle ages could excite among the higher orders of the clergy, we need only to refer to that scene painted by Marchangy, where he represents some rude warriors relating what had passed during their reception in an apartment at Avignon. "A gentleman of Padua entered the hall and spoke a few words to the Cardinal of St. Vitalis, who uttered a loud cry, and gave signs of the utmost affliction. This cardinal then spoke to those who were near him, and they in their turn lamented with hands raised up to heaven. The news was soon known to all excepting to us, who, comprehending nothing of this general desolation, were thinking that it must mean at least the sack of Rome, or some new schism in Christendom. It was in vain for us to ask the cause. Hardly would any one condescend to answer us, as if we were not worthy to feel this privileged grief, too delicate to reach hearts encased in steel. In the mean time there came in Mathieu Le-Long, Archdeacon of Liege, whose hands the cardinal seized, saying, the celebrated companion of your studies, whose genius all Europe admires, the divine Petrarch, is no more! It is even so, adds the gentleman of Padua, for I have just come from assisting at his obsequies; he died in his house of Arqua, the 18th of last July. The company soon broke up, each retiring to his own home apparently in equal consternation at this common loss."† If we now repair to the solitude of holy cloisters, we shall find the same affectionate converse with the Muse, disproving in its effects that maxim of the old Cratinus, that no verses can long survive which have been written by water-drinkers.‡ The saintly recluses of the middle ages were far from evincing that contempt for poetry and gentle studies which is so loudly professed by those modern theologians who are seen welcoming vile political debates, and engaging themselves in the vain and odious controversies of men. "For what reason I compose this work in verse," says Cælius Sedulius, the Irish priest in the sixth century, speaking of his great poem, "I will briefly explain. There are many whom an harmonious style and the songs of poets delight to such a degree that they take no interest in any work of rhetorical eloquence, neglecting all such studies, and being so fond of

\* II.

† Tristan, tom. vi. 101.  
c 2

‡ Hor. Epist. i. 19.



the sweetness of verses that whatever they receive in that way they commit to memory. I thought then that the manners of such persons ought to be not rejected, but cultivated, in order that every one according to his genius may be procured in a more voluntary manner for God.\* But, independent of the efforts excited by charity, Plato would have said, that the monks were poets by profession, and sooth I believe if any convertite had proposed to them the question of the Athenian, "Are we to receive tragic poets into our state?" there would have been always some father sufficiently imbued with deep philosophy to make a reply in words similar to his, and with the smile of saintly brightness: "O reverent stranger, we are ourselves poets and makers of tragedies, authors of the best and most beautiful tragedy. The whole of our state is but an imitation of the best and most beautiful life, and we say that in fact that is the truest tragedy."† But in a lower and more ordinary sense we gladly admit the children of the Muses, among whom did not disdain to walk the great St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Columban of Ireland, and Jacopone, that saint and poet, monk, mendicant, ascetic, and traveller, that worthy predecessor of Dante. Was it not a monk of good life, John of the Abbey of Hauteselve, who translated into Latin the ancient romance of Dolopathos or the seven sages, the French translation of which was addressed by Hebers to the Bishop of Meaux? Was it not Guillaume de Guigneville, a monk of Chalis, who composed the romance of the three Pilgrimages, that of man while on the earth, that of the soul when departed from the body, and that of our Lord who comes to visit his people? Did not Adam of St. Victor, that holy monk, during his travels in Greece, compose some sacred poems?‡ And did not Thibaud de Marly, a monk of the Cistercian order in the Abbey of Vaux de Sarnay, where he died in the odour of sanctity, in the year 1247, write a celebrated romance in verse?§ Bernard of Cluni wrote a poem in Latin of three thousand verses on the contempt of the world,|| and Mabillon commends the verses of Marc, of Monte Casino, the disciple of St. Benedict, which are the only vestiges that remain there of the studies of that time.\*\* Who has not heard of Aboon, a monk of St. German des Pres, who died in 924, and of his Homeric poem on the siege of Paris by the Normans in the year 885? John du Pin, a monk of Vaucelles, who was a good theologian, a great philosopher and naturalist, was also a poet of renown. He employed sixteen years in composing his great work, entitled, "Le champ vertueux de bonne vie," having begun it in the year 1324.†† Is it forgotten that the first treatise on the art of poetry, which appeared in the French tongue, was written by a prior of the abbey of St. Genevieve at Paris?‡‡ or that the oldest Italian poet is the great St. Francis of Assisi? or that the friar Guitone of Arezzo is reckoned among the founders of Italian poetry? or that the most ancient poem existing in a vulgar tongue, if we except the Niebelungen lay, was composed by the monk Otfrid, of the monas-

\* Sedulii Epist. Fabricius, Poet. Vet. Eccles. Opera.

† Plato de Legibus, lib. vii.

‡ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, tom. i. ii. c. 5.

|| L'Abbe Massieu, Hist. de la Poesie Française, 87.

\*\* Tractat. de Studiis Monasticis, cap. 11.

†† Massieu, Hist. de la Poesie Française, 212.

§ Id. tom. vi. 73.

‡‡ Id. 222.

tery of Weissemburg, who lived about the middle of the ninth century? This is a versified translation of the Gospels. The author was a disciple of the celebrated Raban Maur, Abbot of Fulda, and he dedicated his work to Luitbert, Bishop of Mayence. This monk Otfrid, in the preface, blames the French of his time for neglecting their own language, and complains that no one will write excepting in Latin; his object was to impart the advantages of poetry to the people. The historians of German poetry will tell you also of a remarkable poem, composed by a monk Werner in the twelfth century, of which the subject was the life of the blessed Virgin, in which were united the epic repose with the eulogistic transports of revering gratitude.\* A poem of great interest on the same subject was also composed by Philip the Carthusian. The courts of princes could bear witness that poetry was cultivated by religious men; Helynand was a poet who used to be invited every day after dinner to recite his verses before Phillippe-Augustus. The most celebrated piece of his composition was a poem on death, which is allowed to contain passages of great sublimity. After passing his early years at court, and in the castles of nobility, he became a monk and retired to the abbey of Cistercians at Froimont, in the diocese of Beauvais. On leaving the world he left also all the spirit, views, and interests of the world, but he did not forsake the Muse; he led so holy a life that he was regarded as one of the lights of his order. France beheld in him a poet who was a saint; he was also a man of profound learning: he composed many works in prose, a chronicle, a treatise on the advantages of a monastic life, and one on the policy of princes, which evinced great wisdom and ability. His poems continued to be held in such esteem, that Vincent of Beauvais, who wrote under St. Louis, speaking of the year 1209, says, "At this time lived Helynand, monk of Froimont, a man of extraordinary knowledge and virtue, to whom our language is indebted for the poem on death, which is now in the hands of every one as a work of great elegance and of acknowledged utility." Will you hear now for what favours the abbot Guiberet, the disciple of Bede, writes to his most loving and sweet friend in Christ, Lullus the bishop? "Since you have asked for some works of the blessed father Bede, I have prepared, with the help of my boys, to the best of our power, what I now send you, namely, his books on the man of God, Cuthbert, composed in prose and verse. I should willingly have sent you more had I been able. But the present winter has been so severe in our island with intense frost and dreadful winds, that the fingers of our transcribers have been unable to execute more books. If there should be any man in your parishes who can make glass vessels, I beg that you will induce him to come here as soon as the season becomes mild; for we have no one who is acquainted with the art. It would delight me also to have a harper who could play upon the harp which we call *rotta*, because I have a harp, but no artist to play upon it. If it be not too much, I wish that you would send me such a person. I beg that you will not despise my petition, nor turn me into ridicule on account of it, and as for the other works of Bede, of blessed memory, I

---

\* Rosenkranz Geschichte der Deutschen Poesie im Mittelalter, 177.

promise you if I live that I will fulfil your desire.”\* It may be remarked in conclusion, relative to the monastic poets, that many of their legends or short histories of holy persons have been acknowledged to possess considerable poetic merit. The German critics speak with fondness of the legend of Alexius, by Konrad of Würzburg, of that of the two Johns, by Heinz of Constanx, of the journey of the holy Brandan, in old German verse, which was celebrated in the middle ages, of the legend of St. Martina, by Hugo of Langenstein, and of that of the holy William of Oranse which was sung in the twelfth century in the language of the northern Franks, by Guillaume de Bapaume, and in German, by Wolfram von Eschenbach. But it was not only men separate to the church who possessed the enjoyments of the holy Muse; history records the names of multitudes in every walk of life during the middle ages, whose works evince a tender and poetic mind of boundless fecundity, and alive to the noblest and loftiest conceptions. It would not be too much to affirm that the people generally were then, not as is now supposed, mere animals of clay and spirits gross, but poets; and the reason of this phenomenon we shall better understand hereafter when we come to speak of the offices and festivals of the church. Dante and Petrarch do not stand isolated like beings of another world in their generation. They possessed but the art of expressing that which they felt in common with their contemporaries, and of developing in the language of genius the sweet and profound impressions which the multitude also experienced from the mysteries of faith, and the loveliness of nature. Do we suppose that ordinary men, in those ages of whom history takes no note, had not also their visions of hell, purgatory, and heaven? That they had not also their seasons when the love of solitude would impel them to fly the city, and go wandering about the country, in summer seated in the shade on a green lawn or reclining on the bank of a river, and when autumn approached repairing to the woods, followed by the Muses? That they could not taste also how sweet was the pure and serene air, that their eyes would not contemplate with joy the stars which shone over them? Socrates says, that while Homer lived, he used to be utterly neglected,† but it was not so with the poets of the middle ages. When Petrarch came to Arezzo, his native town, all the inhabitants went out to meet him, and paid him the same respect and homage that they would have shown to a king. Such was the enthusiasm of a goldsmith at Bergamo, named Henry Capra, that he renounced his trade to commence the study of philosophy and poetry in the steps of Petrarch, whom he persuaded to come to his house, where he received him in a style of royal magnificence, with such joy and honour, that people feared he would lose his senses.

That noble cavalier, Pandolphe, of the ancient house of Malatesta, was so delighted with the works of Petrarch, that he sent a painter to make his portrait. Rienze at one time owed his preservation, as Petrarch relates, to this love of poetry: for it being rumoured at Avignon that he was a great poet, they thought it a kind of sacrilege to put a man to death of so sacred a profession. In another letter, Petrarch describes

\* S. Bonif. Epist. lxxxix.

† Plato de Repub. lib. x.



the passion for poetry which prevailed at this time, not in the city of Avignon alone, but in all parts; for he says, "Verses rain in upon me every day from France, Germany, Greece, and England. Our lawyers and physicians will listen to none but Homer and Virgil. What do I say? Even labourers, carpenters, and masons, abandon their hammers and shovels to lay hold of Apollo and the Muses. The other day a father came up to me in tears, and said, 'See how you treat me who have always loved you: you have been the death of my only son.' I was so struck with these words, and the air of the man who spoke them, that I remained for some time motionless. At last, recovering myself, I replied, that I neither knew him nor his son. 'It is of little consequence whether you know him or not,' replied the old man; 'he knows you too well. I have ruined myself to bring him up to the law; and now he tells me he will follow no steps but yours. I am thus disappointed of all my hopes.'" Charles Fontaine, in like manner, used to be often lectured by his uncle, Jean du Guè, a lawyer and avocat of the parliament of Paris, who endeavoured to prevail upon him to forsake the Muses for the bar, saying to him—

"Mieux vaut gain que de philosophe  
A gens qui ont leur ménage à conduire;"\*

But it is hardly necessary to add, such arguments had little weight with youth during these spiritual ages, when even tradesmen devoted themselves to the Muse. The famous Nicolas Flamel, from being at first but a simple scrivener in Paris, became a painter, a mathematician, an architect, a chemist, a philosopher, and a poet! What an extraordinary state of society was that which existed in Provence, under the sceptre of those amiable and poetic princes, who used to exempt their subjects from paying subsidies on condition that they could produce amongst them a troubadour! †—or that which was seen at the court of Urbino, when it was the asylum of the Muses, under the Duke Guidobaldo da Montefeltro? Historians relate, that many cities in the middle ages were in a peculiar degree favoured by the Muses. The poetic fame of Tholouse was inherited in Germany in the fourteenth century by Mainz, Strasburg, Colmar, Frankfurt, Würzburg, Zwickau, and Prague; in the fifteenth by Nürnberg and Augsburg; and in the sixteenth by Regensburg, Ulm, Munich, Steiermark, Breslau, and Dantzic. But generally speaking, as was before observed, the multitude, from which a great part of poetry springs, and to which, in one sense, it must return to be judged, was then inclined to receive poetic inspiration. The Muses would not then have separated their admirer from the people, according to the expression of the Roman poet; ‡ for ordinary life was then poetical, so that the personal impressions and recollections of men corresponded with the beautiful creations of poesy. The poets of these ages, like Guillaume de Lorris, frequently trace the origin of their works to some dream which they really had experienced while sleeping upon some sweet violet bank of a clear river in the season of spring, or to some ride by night in the midst of a tempest over a moor, or to some lonely watch near the battlements on narrow wall, marking below the sudden

\* Gouget, tom. xi. 118.

† Tristan, tom. vi. 233.

‡ Hor. Car. i. 1.

hastening of the swine, who snatch up straw in foresight of a storm, while the distant howl of wolves rises over the surrounding forest. It was not strange that youths who had swam by night in Menai's straits, when "the livid sparkles, those lightnings on the wave, crested the broken tides," should afterwards have had a wild romantic dream, which, with little effort, might employ the genius of a poet. Life admitted then of high natural enjoyments, and consequently men were formed to poetry. They were poets precisely because they lived simply and had an unsophisticated heart. It is a false, and not a Christian civilization, that kills the imagination and banishes the Muse from all converse with mankind.

Moreover, meekness and humility are essential to poetry, for pride is incompatible with its joys. The proud are too knowing to become or to continue poets. The sensations caused in us by the various beauties of literature and art are so fine and delicate, that they perish at the first effort of the mind to understand their causes and relations. In general, pleasure defies analysis, and we are affected exactly in proportion as we are ignorant of the manner how. The proud curiosity of the moderns has impoverished their imagination. That sensibility, which, in youth, extended to all surrounding objects, gradually departs, and the same men, who had once so lively a sense of beauty, finish by regarding it with indifference. Do not these observations of Arnaud on the style of Plato, show clearly that meekness conduces to the possession of poetic enjoyment? \* Now this artificial and perverted state, the result, not of a law of nature, but of a formal apostasy, which is substituted for the natural and renovated order of human life,—this proud curiosity, which only condescends to accept the gifts of heaven on condition of submitting them to an analysis,—did not exist in the ages of which we are attempting to relate the moral history; and therefore the assistance and the consolations of poetry were possessed in all their fulness. The very names of the streets of cities, as in Paris, bore testimony to the importance of the harper, who, like Reginald, had inhabited them, and the roads through forest wilds were designated by the titles that were celebrated in heroic song. † The poet, or harper, was a welcome visitor in the castle or in the cottage—men listened to him, as Plato says, as to one who knew many things; and they used him as boys make use of aged persons,—loving to hear their sweet tales. ‡ Even amidst the cold regions of the North, the people were not all in these ages, as one might at present suppose, men like those described by Æschylus, whose lively blood dull draughts of barley wine had clogged. || These were the days when a young Harold bard of brave St. Clair,

—————"born where restless seas  
Howl round the storm-swept Orcaes:  
Where erst St. Clairs held princely sway  
O'er isle and islet, strait and bay!"

would come to Roslin's bowers,—

\* Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscriptions, tom. xxxvii.

† In the diocese of Paris there was a road called le Chemin de la Table Ronde; and the Rue de la Harpe was Vicus Reginaldi Citharistæ. Lebeuf, tom. i. ii. 567.

‡ Plato, Hippias Major.

|| Suppl.

"Where, by sweet glen and green-wood tree,  
He learn'd a milder minstrelsy;  
Though something of the northern spell  
Mix'd with the softer numbers well."

These were the days when nobles in the castle halls, *Μύθοισιν τέργοντο πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἐνέποντες*, as Plutarch says,

"And noble youths, the strain to hear,  
Forsook the hunting of the deer."

Even the pages of princesses were poets then, as was Michael Marot when page to Marguerite of France; and noble barons expected a poetic nature in their squires, as when Marmion, sitting under the wide chimney arch of the hostel, says,

"Fitz-Eustace, know'st thou not some lay  
To speed the lingering night away?  
We slumber by the fire."

King Edward I. had a poet in his camp on his expedition into Scotland, who was a monk, named Baston. He was present in the dreadful battle, and describes the death of Sir Giles de Argentine with great feeling.—

"Nobilis Argenten, pugil inclyte, dulcis Egidi  
Vix scieram mentem cum te succumbere vidi."

Who need be told, that even the banquets of these ages were associated with a poetic taste? *Τὰ δὲ Διανύσου χάριτες*, of which Pindar speaks,\* were as familiar with our feudal ancestors as with the ancients.† For Christianity did not declare war against all Homeric manners. Speaking of the Provençal poets, Huet says, that the verses which Homer puts in the mouths of Phemius and Demodocus at the courts of Penelope and of Alcinous, and those which Virgil makes Iopas sing in the court of Dido, may prove the antiquity of the Guay Savoir. Simonides was a troubadour in the Castle of Scopas, and Lord of Thessaly; and Arion represented the same character with the princes of Italy. The ancient Gauls had also their romantic bards: and we learn from Possidonius, as quoted by Athenæus, that Luernus, Prince of Auvergne, holding plenary courts and open table, presented a sack full of gold to a strange poet, who had come to honour the feast. Samson gives his robe to the Philistines who explained his enigma; and Pisthetærus, in the *Birds* of Aristophanes, advises another to give his tunic to recompense a poet, who was come to celebrate the praises of their new city.

I know not whether, among the ranks of modern society, it would be possible to select one to which justly would be applicable the words of Plutarch respecting the majority of kings, that they are not Apollos to sing, but Bacchuses to drink, *οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ οὐκ' Ἀπόλλωνες μὲν ἀν' μνηρίσασσι, Διονύσοι δὲ, ἀν' μεθύσθουσιν*;‡ but I am convinced that these could not be used with truth, in reference to the character of the nobility of the middle ages. To propose giving instances illustrative of this assertion might well alarm a reader who was conversant with the pages of Wharton, Gouget, Renaudot, Millot, Tiraboschi, or any of the great literary historians

\* Olymp. xiii.

‡ How to discern true Friends, cap. 16.

† Plutarch, *Quest. Græc.* § 36.



of Europe. But those who have only met with modern descriptions of the feudal age, which ascribe to it the character of their own, may not be unwilling to hear some evidence in proof that the dignity of a noble was not synonymous with a profound contempt and incapacity for every thing but the dull realities of a materialized existence.

In the first age of French poetry there are recorded the names of Thibault de Mailly, of the illustrious house of Mailly, in Picardy, at that time one of the greatest in France, of Tristan, the châtelain of Coucy, and of Blondel, whose faithful attachment to King Richard I. of England was so celebrated in romantic annals. The oldest known poet of Provence was William IX. Count of Poitiers. In the time of St. Louis, nothing was more common than for great nobles and princes to be poets. Charles of Anjou, the king's brother, and afterwards king of Naples, Henry of Soissons, who followed him to the crusade, Henry, Duke of Brabant, Pierre Mauclerc, Count of Brittany, Raoul, Count of Soissons, Thibaut, Count of Champagne, and King of Navarre, were all celebrated for their love and cultivation of poetry. Thibaut, not content with repeating his verses, had them written on the walls of his hall at Provins, and in that of Troyes. Henry of Soissons was a worthy rival, who followed St. Louis to the East, and was made prisoner at the battle of Massoura: so that what Pindar says of the Locrians Epiziphryians, might with strict justice be applied to the devout Paladins, who sought to deliver the Holy Land:—

Μέλει τέ σφισι Καλλίππα  
καὶ χάλκεος Ἰλίου.\*

And as at Corinth, where the bit was first joined to the rein of horses, and the eagle of Jove displayed upon the two parallel frontispieces of temples, and the sweetly-breathing Muse cultivated amidst the dreadful spears of heroes,† so to their towers might have been ascribed poesy and art, and the triumphs of a saintly warfare. How dear was poetry to Charlemagne, who collected all the ancient compositions of the bards! In the time of Charles, Duke of Orleans, father of Louis XII. and uncle of Francis I. the greatest seigneurs of France aspired to be poets and men of learning; and as Gouget says, the majority of them were writers. The Duke of Orleans had a noble genius and an admirable taste for poetry. In the manuscript collection of his poems on vellum, which the Abbé Gouget consulted, were also the poems of John Duc de Bourbon, of Philippe-le-Bon, Duc de Bourgogne, of Renè D'Anjou, of John of Lorraine, of the Duc de Nevers, of the Comte de Clermont, and of John, Duc d'Alençon. Spain, England, and Italy, could early boast of having poets among their highest princes and nobles.

Illustrious women were inspired by the same enthusiasm. Marguerite of Austria, while regent of Belgium, was the distinguished patroness of the poets, Jean Moulinet and Jean le Maire. She was herself a poet, and also an excellent prose writer: her most considerable work is the history of her misfortunes. The highest nobles of Germany followed in the same track, as Henry of Breslau, the Markgraf of Meissen, Otto of Brandenburg, John of Brabant, Ulrich von Lichtenstein, whose Castle of the Frauenburg was renowned in heroic song.

\* Olymp. x.

† Id. xiii.

The Swabian poets flourished a century later than the Provençal, and derived their models from them. Frederic I. composed a short history of Provence. Many verses of the Count Rudolf of Nürnberg resemble those of Folque of Marseille.\* Celebrated in the middle ages were the German poets Hartmann von der Aue, who sung the Knights of the Round Table, Wernt of Gravenberg, who composed the Wigalois, Walther of the Vogelweide, Konrad of Würzburg, Henry Frauenlob, Wolfgang Röhn, Marner Müglin, Klingsor, Boppo, Regenbogen, Konrad Nachtigal, Herman Oertel, and Fritz Zorn, who composed the mystic twelve of the Nürnberg school, that were entitled the poets of the Wartburg. The wise grand master of the Teutonic order in the fourteenth century, Luther of Brunswick, loved poetry and music, and was himself a poet, singing the praise of the Holy Barbara, a saint greatly venerated in the order, whose relics had been brought to Kulm by the brave Dietrick of Bernheim. His example had such an effect, that throughout all the land of Prussia a taste for poetry became general, and poetic paraphrases were made of the Prophet Daniel, and of the book of Job. The head convent of the order at Marienburg became the resort of minstrels and poets, some of whom were also knights and priests, who made religion and history the first subjects of their muse.† Spain could boast of her poetic princes: Don John the First, King of Arragon, was thought by his people to devote too much of his time to poetry; he lived always in the company of poets, whom he invited from every country.‡ Martin Franc, in his *Champion des Dames*, says,

Lisez souvent au Breviaire,  
Du doux poëte Alain chartier,  
Eslevez toujours le viaire  
A haultes besongnes traictier.

This is an allusion to the *Breviaire des Nobles*, of which he says, that all knights,

Le Breviaire de Maistre Alain,  
Doivent lire deux fois le jour.

In fact, John le Masle, an Angevine, who has written a commentary on this poem, says, that in the time of our ancestors it was in such esteem, that all pages and young gentlemen were obliged to learn it by heart, and to repeat it every day. The verses of these noble poets are often associated with the memory of an affecting and heroic history. John Regnier, escuyer and seigneur of Garchy, a counsellor of Philip the Good, was a great poet, whose affection for the poor was noticed in the last book. He had travelled, as he says, instigated by youthful desire to see strange countries, and had visited not only Italy and many parts of Europe, but also Greece, Turkey, the Holy Land, Armenia, and many other kingdoms. On his return he resided at Auxerre; but in the wars between Philip and Charles VII. of France, he was seized by the latter and imprisoned in a tower at Beauvais, which was opposite the cathedral. In his prison he composed many poems, one of

\* Rosenkranz *Geschichte des Deutschen Poesie im Mittelalter*, 52.

† Voigt. *Geschichte Preussens*, iv.

‡ Diego Savedra Faxarda *Christian Prince*, tom. i. 62.

which was entitled, his fortunes and adventures, which begins with a devout prayer to Jesus Christ. The other prisoners, finding out his talent, used to entreat him to write poems for them, which he did. One is entitled, for John Faulcon, a Norman esquire. Besides this, every solemn festival received his offering, that is, a poem on the subject which it commemorated. The poet, Charles de Clavison, who made it his pride that, in an age of heresy, he had always been attached to the Catholic religion, was a knight and lieutenant of the King of France; he dedicated his poems to his sister, Constance de Bauffremont, who was abbess of the royal monastery of Saint Menoulx.

Here then, I conceive, is proof sufficient that the race of men during these ages of faith, loved and possessed the consolations of poetry: it may be required, however, to state briefly what were the merits of those compositions, and their claims to the honour of the Parnassian mount. In the first place, the enthusiasm with which they were received ought to be a sufficient warrant to us that they fulfilled at least one of the essential ends of poetry, which is to move and to exalt. In their rapturous delight the men of these ages cried, "the course of the Loire swells with pride for having beheld the birth of Jean de Meun upon its banks." Jean de Meun, thus celebrated as a poet, who finished the Romance of the Rose, was a doctor of theology, and with him and Guillaume de Lorris, in about the year 1050, under Henry I., the French poetry may be said to have commenced.\* Such was the admiration excited by Bernardo Accolti, in the time of Leo X., that when it was rumoured he was about to recite his verses the shops used to be shut, and the most learned men would crowd to hear him.

The applause with which the divine comedy of Dante was received at the time, is attested by the fact of pulpits having been erected in many cities, from which it was expounded. Boccaccio was employed for that purpose by the Florentine republic: to him succeeded in the same office Antonio Padovano and Philip Villani. In Bologna, Benvenuto of Imola, became a public lecturer upon it in the year 1375. In Pisa, Francesco of Bartolo da Buti gave a similar course in the year 1386. The celebrated Giovanbatista Gelli, from being a shoemaker in the streets of Florence, became one of the greatest writers of Tuscany, through the intense admiration which he conceived for the divine comedy. He used to say, that after being born a Christian, he knew no greater happiness than to have been born in the country of Dante. Yet when that immortal poem first appeared, there was nothing new or singular in its design, which was but a development of the deepest and loftiest thoughts that had long moved indistinctly through the minds of men, perpetuated by the tradition of many visions, like that related by St. Boniface, or that of the knight Tundal in Ireland, or that of Rotcharius the monk, in the time of Charlemagne. But, in general, the character of the poetry of the middle ages was religious, in so much that when poets produced works of a contrary tone, they were indebted for their success to the ingenious fervour, which enabled the people to put a devout construction upon them, and by means of a supposed allegorical sense to impart to them a holy character. Thus it was maintained,

---

\* L'Abbe Massieu, *Hist. de la Poësie Française*, 67.



notwithstanding the indignation and impressive eloquence of Gerson, that the Romance of the Rose was all allegorical, and that it contained sublime wisdom to correct men, that no attention was to be paid to the letter, but that the deep religious sense was to be carefully investigated. This rose, so difficult to gather, was wisdom, truth, grace, Christian piety, salvation, and, finally, the beatific vision. The Abbé Massieu says, that it is impossible not to smile at the simplicity with which all this is supposed in the editor's preface. But still this judgment of its contemporaries is interesting; it shows that in these ages men exercised as much ingenuity in turning to a religious and virtuous sense what might have been really objectionable, as the moderns evince in detecting a bad motive for every production. For such ingenuity, indeed, there was no occasion in order to discern the religious sense of the greater poets of the middle ages, those monarchs of sublimest song, who even in their lightest productions, like Shakspeare, evinced the constant action of a profound revering spirit. Dante lived at the time of the crusades, when all Europe rose against Asia; and yet, as a French writer remarks, this immense and awful event was not the subject which seized his poetic imagination. There was in the interior of Europe something still greater than this sublime episode, that which was the cause of this prodigious movement, religion. Three centuries later, the beautiful imagination of Tasso, amidst the delights of the court of Ferrara, found nothing more admirable to commemorate than the crusades. But even in presence of these holy wars, and while their memory was fresh, there was something still above them, the church, and it was this which he comprised in his mysterious and immortal Vision of the Life to Come. The example of St. Avitus, Archbishop of Vienne, has been already adduced as that of a pontiff and a poet. He was born in the middle of the fifth century, and was a firm supporter of the Catholic faith against the Arians. His poems in hexameter verse, being six in number, are on the Creation, on Original Sin, on the Expulsion from Paradise, on the Deluge, on the passage of the Red Sea, and on the Praise of Virginity. The three first are only, as it were, cantos of one poem, which may be called the Loss of Paradise, and which modern critics acknowledge deserves to be compared with that of Milton. It has been thought by some, that his description of the garden of Eden is rather superior than inferior to that of the English poet; for, though so shortly removed from paganism, he mixes in his pictures fewer mythological images, the imitation of antiquity is less visible, and the description of the beauties of nature more varied and more simple. Like Milton, he has imparted to Satan some traits of his original state, and a certain vestige of moral grandeur; he too has painted Satan, at the moment when he enters Paradise and perceives Adam and Eve for the first time,

"Proh dolor, hoc nobis subitum consurgere plasma,  
Invisumque genus nostra crevisse ruina?  
Me celsum virtus habuit, nunc ecce neglectus  
Pellor, et angelico limus succedit honori.  
Nec tamen in totum periit, pars magna retentat  
Vim propriam, summaque cluit virtute nocendi.  
Nil differre juvat: jam nunc certamine blando

Congrediar, dum prima salus, experta nec ullos  
Simplicitas ignara dolos ad tela patebit."

It will be easier, he continues, to deceive them while they are alone, and before they shall have launched a fruitful posterity into the eternity of ages.

"Immortale nihil terra prodire sinendum est;  
Fons generis pereat, capitis defectio membris  
Semen mortis erit.  
Hæc mihi dejecto tantum solatia restant:  
Si nequeo clausos iterum conscendere cælos,  
His quoque claudentur: levius cecidissem putandum est  
Si nova perdatur simili substantia casu.  
Sit comes excidii, subeat consortia pænæ,  
Et quos prævideo nobiscum dividat ignes.  
Sed ne difficilis fallendi causa putetur,  
Hæc monstranda via est, dudum quam sæpe cucurri  
In pronum lapsus: quæ me jactantia cælo  
Expulit, hæc hominem Paradisi è limine pellat.  
Sic ait, et gemitus vocem clausere dolentis."

The departure from Paradise is thus described:

"His pater exactis, hædorum pellibus ambos  
Induit, et sancta Paradisi ab sede rejicit.  
Tunc miseri egressum properant, mundumque vacantem  
Intrant, et celeri perlustrant omnia cursu.  
Et quanquam variis herbis ac gramine picta  
Et virides campos, fontesque et flumina monstrat,  
Illis fœda tamen species mundana putatur  
Post, Paradise, tuam, totumque videntibus horror.  
Quæque magis multo paradiso extenditur, illis  
Angustatur humus, strictumque tuentibus orbem  
Omnia lata nimis parent angusta duobus.  
Squallet et ipse dies, caussantur sole sub ipso  
Subductam lucem."

The middle ages were familiar with innumerable poems of a high moral interest, the fragments of which still charm and astonish us. Celebrated with our Anglo-Saxon ancestors was the poem of *Beowulf*, which has been termed a Gothic *Iliad*. It is so full of noble sentiments and poetic imagery, that the learned Dane, Grundtvig, affirms without hesitation, that any poet of any age might have been proud to have produced such a work. Equally renowned were the song of the *Traveller* in Anglo-Saxon, which is found in the great book at Exeter, bequeathed to the library of that cathedral by Bishop Leofric, at the close of the eleventh century, the triumphal song of the Battle of Brunanburh, and also the funeral dirge over Brithnoth, who, during the unhappy reign of Ethelred, fell gloriously fighting in the battle of Meldun.

Genius, indeed, must not be estimated by years, nor is every old poem holy or inspiring; but yet what reader of taste at the present day does not recur with pure delight to those English poems of the middle ages, collected by Percy, Wharton, Ellis, and Scott, which recount the heroic deeds, the mourning, and the devout joys of our Catholic ancestors? Many of these are by poets whose names have remained unknown; and some are said to have been the sole productions of their authors, who never made any other, like Tynnichus, the Chalcidian, who never composed any poem but that *Pæon*, which Plato says all

used to sing, and which he affirms to be nearly the most beautiful of all hymns, the invention of which, having been without art, he therefore thinks was justly said to be divine rather than human.\* In other works I have made use of these ancient Christian poems, in reference to the manners of chivalry,

“When all of wonderful and wild  
Had rapture for the lonely child.”

The interest attached to the poetic associations of those days defies the cavils of modern criticism. Lord Byron, writing as a reviewer, attempted to despise the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*; but while he travelled amidst the beautiful scenes of Greece, he could not refrain from calling to mind, even at the court of Ali, the description of the castle of Branksome.

In turning to consider the merit of the early poets of France, we do not leave names and works of a domestic interest; for to Englishmen these old French poets were in some manner naturalized. Several of them had visited England, and were received in illustrious houses, where they nourished the genius of many of our own bards, and instructed the youth of noble families; as was the case with Denisot. The poesies of Ronsard were a consolation to Mary Stuart, who used to read them in the days of her sorrowful captivity, and to find in them a relief that could lighten the burden of her chains.† The modern French have nothing to despise in these ancient poets, but rather from them they might learn simplicity and nature, as well as beauty and force of language. Even the Abbé Massieu admits that the old metrical romances of France contained sometimes passages approaching the sublime. Where we least expect it, we find them giving to Christian virtue a most gracious, venerable, and august character, and striking terror into the guilty. Their object is not to represent the varieties of human character, but to move the soul with admiration and surprise, and that is the end which Aristotle had in view where he affirms that a philosopher is a lover of fables.‡ Henry Stephens made a collection of sentences from the old French romances, which he said were like Rabbis for the knowledge of many things which belong to the French language. These men, like Guillaume de Lorris, the Ennius of France, who began the *Romance of the Rose*, or like the songster of Limoges commemorated by Dante, could not at least be condemned as movers and fabricators of new words, an offence so alien from the office of a poet,|| though so common with those of our age who have risen to fame. William of Malmesbury observes, that at the time when the English were fond of making use of abstruse and pompous words derived from the Greek, their greatest poet St. Aldhelm, Bishop of Shireburn, was remarkable for not using exotic words unless very rarely, and when they were necessary. In the descriptive poetry of the middle ages, there was not that fault of attempting to conquer difficulties which do not repay the conqueror, of describing what has no need of being described; objects are only named, and the rest is left to the imagination; a word or a comparison place them before our eyes. It did not resemble the de-

\* Plato Io.

† Metaphysic. lib. i. c. 2.

VOL. II.—6

‡ Gouget, *Bibliothèque Française*, tom. xii. 205.

|| Aristoph. *Nubes*, 1397.



scriptive poetry of our times, which, as Guizot justly remarks, is scientific rather than picturesque, and which, by dint of analysing objects minutely like an anatomist, makes them appear dissected and decomposed.

It is easy to perceive, too, in many instances, that this old poesy embodied the thoughts of men who possessed, as Marot says, “un gentil entendement.” The modern critic Gouget admits, in praise of the poet Andrieu du Hecquet, that he reproves vice without sourness, instructs without being morose, that he is playful without insolence, that he assumes a tone of irony without saying a word that is personal, and that he praises without flattery. Huet, though he derides the old romantic poetry, seems delighted to find that the learned Italians acknowledge that they learned it from the provençals. He remarks that the ancient romantic poems have served to throw much light upon the history of Spain, and to correct the order of its chronology; and though he affirms that D’Urfe was the first to elevate romances from barbarism, it is not to be doubted but that those old Spanish poems, which he so much despised, will survive the fame of that incomparable *Astrea* to which he assigned the palm. In truth, it appears that very high notions were entertained during these ages of the nature of poetry, and of the object to which its lightest effusions should be directed. The troubadour has songs for all kinds of glory, and a tear for all misfortunes. “Jonglerie,” says a contemporary of St. Louis, “has been instituted to put the good in the way of joy and of honour.” Then came the troubadours to sing the history of past times, and to excite the brave in relating the prowess of the ancients. Half a century afterwards the maintainers of the “gai savoir,” at Toulouse, exhorted poets to fly from sadness, and to make noble verses in order that all the world might be the more disposed to faith, and to virtue. There was to be nothing childish or effeminate in their verse. The advice given to them resembled that of *Milon* to *Battos*, recommending the choice of an heroic theme.

ταῦτα χερὶ μοχλευντας ἐν ἀλφειᾷ ἀνδρες αἰδῶν\*

But as for these songs about private little domestic affections, it is only fit that you sing them to your mother at her toilet.

Μυθίσδεν τᾷ μητρὶ κατ’ εἰνὴν ὀρεθρευούσα.\*

Poetry, said they, is not to be degraded to an art merely administering to pleasure. The sages of antiquity had nobler sentiments respecting it, one of whom noticing the saying of the majority that the great object of poetry and music should be the giving pleasure to the soul, adds, but to utter such word is neither endurable in any manner, nor holy, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν οὔτε ἀνεκτὸν οὔτε ὅσιον τὸ παράπαν φέγγεσθαι.† “So far I agree to the general opinion,” says *Plato*, “that music should be estimated by the delight which it inspires, but it is not by the delight of any one taken promiscuously; but that is the most beautiful muse which delights the best men, and those who have been best educated—those who are most remarkable for their virtue. Therefore, we maintain that virtue is an essential qualification for a judge of such things: for neither in the the-

\* Theocrit. Id. v.

† *Plato de Legibus*, lib. ii.

atre ought a true judge to take any notice of the clamour of the multitude, and of its undisciplined judgment. The practice of determining the victory by the clapping of hands corrupted the poets themselves, who were induced to consult only the vicious pleasures of the multitude, and to look to them for instruction; and it corrupted the pleasure of the theatre, for it ought always to have exhibited better manners than those of the people, and to have inspired them with a sense of higher pleasure than their own.”\* What a contrast is there between the judgment of the ancient sage respecting poetry, and that of our contemporaries! “That which does not admit justice,” says Socrates, “does not admit any thing pertaining to the Muses, whatever is unjust is unpoetical,” *Ἀμουσαν τὸ δὲ ἄδικον*.”† In their estimate of the importance and object of poetry, our ancestors adhered to the spirit of the ancient world, whose expressions only needed correction, as where Pindar says of their Apollo, that he invented the harp and bestows the Muse on whom he wills, in order to introduce peaceful law into the heart,‡ and as where Hesiod says, in a connected strain,|| that poets and kings are from the gods, for under a legitimate domination, the gifts of the Muses to men never seem to emanate from the demon. Nostradamus, in his lives of the Provençal poets, says, that the monk of the golden isles expressed himself as follows, respecting Phanette and Estaphanette, “They excel in poesy, having a kind of divine inspiration, ‘laquelle estoit estimée en vray don de Dieu.’” Horace thought that the Iliad of Homer conveyed a better moral instruction than the works of the most able philosophers, and certainly there is much to learn from the poets of the middle ages, though they might have little to expect from a critic like Quintilian, who excusing himself from deciding between the rival poets Sophocles and Euripides adds, that no one need hesitate to affirm that for all practical purposes Euripides is by far the more useful.§ To a judgment formed on loftier and less earthly views, the simplicity of their construction, the profound piety of their sentiments, the corresponding tone of candour and innocence which characterize them, attended with some degree of that Homeric excellence of sublimity in great things, and of propriety in small, for government may be learned from the names which they give to wines in the fabliaux, cannot but conciliate the affection even of the modern readers, and perpetuate the renown of books which were alike recommended by the consent of the learned as well as by the love of boys. By the poets of the middle ages nature was shown in her totality with a holy earnestness. The solution for all temporal difficulties was sought for in the traditions of spiritual wisdom; and a grand universal view was exhibited of the origin and destiny of the human existence, as may be witnessed in that remarkable book entitled, “*Hortus Deliciarum*,” composed in the twelfth century, by the abbess Herrad of Landsberg, at St. Odilien, near Strasburg, for the instruction and recreation of her sisters. It may be remarked too, that there was nothing forced or still-born in the poetry of the middle ages, because it was in accordance with the living faith of men. It was Homeric and Virgilian not from a cold repetition of Pagan fable and exploded error, but because in accordance

---

\* De Legibus, lib. ii.

|| Theogon.

† Plato, Phædo, 105.

§ Instit. Orat. x. 1.

‡ Pyth. v. 63.

with the true ideal exposed by Tasso it was employed upon such themes as Homer and Virgil would have chosen if they had lived in Christian ages.\* How well does Mamertus of Vienne direct his companion—

“Quanto major ab his cedet tibi gloria cœptis,  
In quibus et linguam exercens, mentem quoque sanctam  
Erudies, laudemque simul vitamque capesses:  
Dumque legis catus et scribis miracula summi  
Vera Dei, propior disces, et carior ipsi  
Esse Deo.”———

But with this principle constantly borne in mind, there was nothing to prevent a Christian poet from knowing and mentioning all things. It was said, that he should read all books, so that strange works ought to be found in his study.

“——— Mais cela n'est offense  
A un Poëte, à qui on doit lascher  
La bride longue, et rien ne lui cacher,  
Soit d'art magique, négromance, ou caballe,  
Et n'est doctrine escripte, ne verballe,  
Q'un vrai Poëte au chef ne deust avoir,  
Pour faire bien d'escrire son devoir.”

But whatever might be the multitude of discordant subjects to which he alluded there should be never any difficulty in discovering what was the poet's own opinion; and heathen imagery was never to be used as a heathen would have applied it. Certainly no poet of the middle ages describing Adam and Eve in Paradise, would, like Milton, have compared them to Jupiter and Juno.† Nor have been obliged to say of Eve,

“With goddess-like demeanour forth she went.‡

Nor, on the other hand, would he like Milton have described angels in language that belonged rather to a heathen. What Villani chiefly admires in Dante, is the art by which he reconciled the ancient poets with Christianity, and transferred their treasures to illustrate the Christian doctrine. In fact, the meek possessed all the intellectual as well as material riches of the earth, on the principle that was even known to Cicero. “Recte ejus omnia dicentur, qui scit uti solus omnibus.”|| In the poetry of Dante, Guinicelli, Cavalcanti, and even Petrarch, were united philosophy and theology, civil science and poetry, the beautiful and the divine, earth and heaven, not from a defective direction of the intelligence as the modern sophists affirm,§ but from a thorough initiation into the mysteries of wisdom, and in accordance with that divine fiat which gave to the poor in spirit, and to the meek, both heaven and earth. To the ages of faith was unknown that erroneous philosophy which first appeared in France during the time of the fourteenth Louis, which rendered men scrupulous and afraid, whenever they beheld religion attended with the chorus of glorious and beautiful offerings of nature, and which taught that men could not have fancy as their companion along with reason as their guide. The great spiritual writers had shown to the exclusive admirers of every thing positive the danger of

\* Dialoghi degl' Idoli.

|| De Finibus, lib. iii. 22.

† Book iv. 500.

‡ Book viii. 59.

§ Antichita Romantiche d'Italia, ii. 213.



affecting to despise poetry. "There are some," says Taulerus, "in this life who too quickly bid adieu to images before truth has delivered them from their power: and because they deliver themselves they scarcely or never can attain to truth." The danger arising from the power of the imagination when not under the control of reason, that Socratic medicine, as Cicero terms it, was indeed never more carefully and acutely explained than in the writings of St. Anselm and other masters of the school, in which we may find passages exactly parallel to that sentence of Tieck, that if the feelings and imagination succeed in setting up their own supremacy, and in overthrowing reason, then each of our higher impulses begets a giant as its son, that will war against God. For doubt, wit, unbelief, and scoffing, are not the only faculties that fight against God; our imagination, our feelings, our enthusiasm, may do the same, though at first they seem to supply faith with so safe and mysterious an asylum." In the blessed John of the Cross, the holy Theresa found a monitor to correct those wanderings of the imagination which had sometimes caused her so much pain, and who enabled her to read from experience that the imagination and the understanding, as she says, are not the same thing.\* It was not overlooked that the possible errors of fancy are as great and their delusions as dangerous as those of reason; but neither was it unobserved in those times which beheld the fall of an Abailard, that as Frederick Schlegel says, there was much more occasion for pointing out the errors incident to reason, than for anxiously warning men against the possible abuse of fancy.† Upon the whole, therefore, to the philosophic views of the ages of faith, the object and employment of poetry were not different from those of religion. Tasso says, that the poem of Dante has contemplation for its object;‡ and accordingly we find that many of the poets then renowned, never began to compose without a formal and devout invocation of the Almighty.|| Moral and pious reflections in verse are mixed up with their histories, as in that celebrated account of the life of Louis de la Tremouille, by John Bouchet, who proposed as his chief object to edify and instruct young knights in their various duties, as also in his book "*Séjour des trois nobles Dames*," though it was written for a particular occasion on the death of Arthur de Goufier, in which he says, that his object is to inspire hope and comfort to all persons in adversity, and to supply brief instruction to teach men how to pass the perilous ways of this dispiteous world. Thus again, Claude Mermet entitled the collection of his poems, the past time of Claude Mermet, of Saint Rambert in Savoy, a poetical work sententious and moral, to give profitable instruction to all persons who love virtue. One poem of Arthur Desire, is entitled, *Les Batailles et Victoires du Chevalier Céleste contre le Chevalier Terrestre*. Raoul de Houdan, of whom Huon de Merry says, that no mouth of a Christian ever said things so well, composed a work entitled, the *Story of the Way of Hell*, which those follow who go to visit the Lord of Hell, "*Plaisant chemin et bonne voye*." As they began with a religious invocation, so they used to finish with a devout prayer. Thus concludes John Ruyr one of his poems:

\* The Castle of the Soul, iv. dwelling.

† Philosophie der Sprache, 180.

‡ Discorsi sul Poema Errico, i.

|| Gouget, *Bibliothèque Française*, tom. xi. 4.

"Jesus soit mon art studieux,  
Et sa sainte croix mon volume."

And the only reward which Martin Franc requires for his long labours in the composition of the *Champion des Dames* in defence of women, to disprove the slanders brought against them in the *Romance of the Rose*, is that they for whom he has composed it, would please to pray for him that he might obtain the kingdom of Paradise. Many of these poets, too, were themselves men of innocence or of sincerely penitential lives. Such were Luis of Leon, Gower, Lydgate, Southell, Tasso, Dante, and Petrarch. The exquisite Latin poems of Marc Antonio Flamminio, the friend of Cardinal Pole, are associated with the image of the most amiable of men, those of Vida, Bishop of Alba, with that of a prelate whose generous disposition had endeared him to the poor, those of Sannazzaro with that of a poet comparable to Virgil, whose heart was ever bent on heavenly musings. In reply to the heir of Petrarch, and on hearing of his death, Boccacio says in his epistle, "After having read your letter, I wept all night for my dear master; not indeed for him; his prayers, his fasts, his life, permit me not to doubt his happiness, but I wept for myself." Philip Villani relates that when Petrarch had grown mature with age, he devoted himself without intermission to the study of theology, to the ecclesiastical office, to prayers and fasting, and that he lived piously and with simplicity. How engaging is the portrait which John Bouchet gives of the poet Pierre Riviere, in the verses which he placed on the tomb of "this child of Poitiers."

"En son jeune âge il fut fort studieux,  
A Dieu devot, aux gens très-gratieux,  
Humble et courtois, et de bonne nature,  
Prisé de tous par sa littérature."

The poet John le Masle, who expressly sung the moral excellence of poets, and their honest freedom, and who was celebrated as the commentator on the *Bréviaire des nobles* of Alain Chartier, who had so well explained all the virtues and perfections which belong to the nobility of a gentleman, could bear this testimony to himself, that he had never sought—

"Pour estre grand en biens, se mettre en servitude,  
Mais tousjours libre et franc, a mis tout son estude,  
A poursuir la vertu."

These are examples and lessons which ought not to be withheld from the youth of our times, which is in such danger of losing sight of the true ideal of the poet, familiar to men in ages of faith, and of mistaking for it the gloomy and delusive phantom of modern genius. The human intelligence is, to the ear of faith, like the statue of Memnon, which sends forth no harmonious sound, unless it be shone upon by the sun of justice. Without those rays to sanctify it, the extraordinary gifts of the Creator may astonish and impart a transitory pleasure to wretched mortals; though, after all, what is Childe Harold by the side of Dante, or Juan compared with the hero of the Jerusalem? but they can never yield a complete and unfailing joy. Sad, at all events, and unutterably miserable is the attempt of those who look to them for models of imitation. Modern literature shows how easy it is to catch the licentious-

ness and the gloom, without the freedom and the depth of Byron, the frivolity of the Troubadour without his grace and tenderness. As Marot says, in allusion to the celebrated but immoral poet Villon,—

“Peu de Villons en bon savoir,  
Trop de Villons pour decevoir.”

But how feeble is language to express the desolation which awaits genius misdirected, and employed to an unholy end, when, as in this once gay and licentious Villon, it beholds the early victims of its influence prematurely departing, and itself comfortless, self-tormented, and alone! Would you hear the mournful testimony of an old poet to the inefficacy of his art to sweeten such days:

“Quand on est jeune, en grand esbattement  
Pour passe-temps et pour contentement,  
C'est un plaisir de sonner la musette;  
Mais puis après, quand l'âge et la disette  
Surprennent tost le poëte estonné,  
Alors s'en va son chant mal entonné,  
Diminuant tout petit à petit,  
Car de sonner il pert tout appetit:  
Alors il hait sa musette et sa muse;  
Si elle s'offre, il la jette et refus.”

St. Fortunatus of Poitiers taught the same lesson in his poem on human life:

“Cum venit extremum, neque Musis carmina prosunt,  
Nec juvat eloquio detinuisse melos.

I am not ignorant that there is a dark and deplorable side belonging to the poetic history of the middle ages; but I reserve my observations respecting it to a future place, where I shall speak in general of the virtue and vice which distinguished them, for the modern opinions will necessarily require an explanation, with respect to the profligacy of the licentious poets, when we may be able to place the fact of their existence in its just and natural point of view. At the present, let us direct our attention for a moment to the theatre, as it was reconstituted in the middle ages. All things, say the teachers of divine wisdom, are lawful to the pure; but some are so essentially tyrannical, so powerful and universal in their tendency to bring men into subjection, to give force to the passions, and to enervate those higher powers of the immortal nature which are to wage war against the ancient serpent, that Christianity has pronounced them to be eternally separate from the sphere of her dominion, and from an association with her consoling promises respecting the enjoyments of a future life. In the form of the ancient world, the theatre evidently stood condemned on different grounds, but whether it was possible to revive it in any other, so as not to have it included among those things, through prudence, and almost necessity, forbidden, was a problem which did not admit of an easy solution. Some, in considering it, might indeed be influenced by caution and unwillingness to sanction any unnecessary restraint which might affect the interests of human genius, while others, with equal zeal in behalf of poesy, might question whether the interests of intelligence were really so concerned in the result as was pretended. Probably it would be very easy to have demonstrated that they were not; and, indeed, the experience and



testimony of men the most removed from ascetical influence, will go far to show that the grandest creations of dramatic poets are not developed by a representation on the stage of a theatre. But, however that question be determined, it is certain that genius lost that instrument of expression when the belief in the heathen mythology was destroyed. From that hour the real dramatic effect, in relation to higher poetry, could only be revived on the stage by an alliance between the theatre and the Christian faith, an association most difficult, most delicate, which it was obvious could not be accomplished until the Church had seen many ages and generations of her children, and which if ever formed, the least relapse to heathen incredulity, or the scepticism of later philosophers, the least relaxation or diminution of simplicity and faith, would inevitably and for ever abolish. Such an union, however, did take place during the middle ages, and it was at an end when they closed, and from thenceforth the genuine children of the muse, they who had really drunk deep of the spirit of Æschylus and Sophocles, might have regarded with the utmost indifference the controversy respecting dramatic representation between the Church and the self-imagined poets who sought to identify the interests of human genius with the success of their art and the encouragement given to their own profession. This brief statement may serve to account for the seeming inconsistency in the language of the clergy, who at one time cry out with the primitive Christians, What union is possible between the Gospel and the muses, between Calvary and the theatre? and at another, are heard to invite men to the new plays, which they have themselves composed, and in which their students perform characters, at the same time that they are condemning actors in ordinary theatres, saying, with John of Salisbury, that it is unquestionably a shameful thing to be an actor; "*satius enim fuerat otiosi quam turpiter occupari*," declaring that actors and buffoons are excluded from the holy communion while they persevere in their malice, thence leaving the patrons and favourers of actors and buffoons to collect what awaits themselves, if those who do and those who consent are to be punished alike,\* and adopting as a passage to be for ever read by their successors in their office for the vigil of Pentecost, the solemn words of St. Augustin, which refer to the theatre in its ordinary state, in that to which it had always a tendency to return: "these things you must renounce, not in word alone, but in deed, and in all the acts of your life. For you are caught and discovered by your cunning enemy, when you profess one thing and perform another, faithful in name and not holding the faith of your promise, at one time entering the church to pour forth prayers, and shortly after in the theatres crying out shamelessly with actors. *Quid tibi cum pompis diaboli quibus renuntiasti?*"†

The history of the Christian drama, though in many respects interesting, need not detain us long: its first efforts are witnessed in those mysteries, as they were termed, of the nativity, of the passion, of the resurrection, and of the acts of the apostles. This forced union, which, however, be it remembered, was the only possible device for affording to a Christian society a dramatic representation of the highest tone, is

\* De Nugis Curialium, lib. i. c. 8.

† Tractat. de Symbol. ad Catechumen.

one of the chief grounds for the accusation of grossness and barbarism brought against the ages of faith by modern writers, who thus enable us to estimate pretty clearly the consistency of their own faith as Christians, and the depth of their sagacity as philosophers. In the villages, on the patronal feasts, the mysteries of their respective patrons and of other saints, used to be performed when every one would contribute, from the baron who lent his finest tapestry, to the poorest rustic, who gave his labour to construct the stage. There were pious spectacles at Paris, Metz, Angers, Poitiers, Rouen, Limoges, and in other cities of France. At Rheims, in the year 1624, the mysteries of the saints were transferred to the theatres of colleges. The personages were not libertines, adulterers, robbers and gamesters, but angels, apostles, doctors of the law, scribes, and tyrants. The people were so familiarized with these scenes, that if any actor of the troop were absent, there was always some young man ready to take his part, and play an angel or a martyr. In England, the first trace of dramatic representation is found in the history of Matthew Paris, where he relates that Geoffrey, a learned Norman, master of the school of the abbey of Dunstable, composed the play of St. Catharine, which was acted by his scholars in the year 1110. Another writer, in 1174, mentions that religious plays were acted in London, representing either the miracles wrought by holy confessors, or the sufferings of the martyrs. The Gray Friars at Coventry used to represent mysteries on the festival of Corpus Christi, comprising the story of the Old and New Testament, composed in the old English rithme, which used to attract vast multitudes of people to the city. In the year 1483 Richard III. visited Coventry in order to see the plays, and in 1492 they were acted in presence of Henry VII. and his queen. In every great castle the children of the chapel used to act religious plays during the twelve days of Christmas and at Corpus Christi. There is notice of this in the Earl of Northumberland's household book. In every college pieces of this kind used to be performed. The confraternities of the mysteries were composed of persons of the most innocent manners and of the purest intentions; and who can doubt but that these spectacles tended to keep men familiar with the themes which should be ever dearest to the Christian family?\*

At the same time it is to be remembered that, owing to incorrigible abuses, they were not every where equally favoured by the encouragement of the religious. The reply of the Sacristan, in the convent of the Franciscans at Poitou, to Villon, who came to borrow a magnificent cope, to be borne by one of his actors in the piece entitled *The Passion*, proves that such spectacles were sometimes regarded with displeasure by the clergy.† With respect to the literary merit of these pieces, their most disdainful antagonists admit that they are enlivened by boldness of incident, and that occasionally they evince an unexpected tenderness and delicacy of expression. It was from one of these plays called *Adam*

---

\* See Monteil, *Hist. des Français*, tom. iii. *Hist. du Théâtre Français*, par Parfait, tom. i. 11. *Hist. de Poésie Française*, par l'Abbé Massieu, règne de Charles VII. *Historia Universitatis Parisiensis* a Buleo, annis 1469, 1483, 1487. *Antiq. de Paris*, par Sauval. Wharton, *Hist. of English Poetry*, &c.

† *Hist. de Poésie Française*, par l'Abbé Massieu, 257.

and Eve, which Milton saw represented in Italy, that he is said to have taken the first hint for his poem of *Paradise Lost*. In Catholic countries, at the present day, there are sometimes to be seen, at banquets, certain religious shows in miniature, representing the annunciation, the nativity, or the epiphany, and the kind of galvanic effect which these innocent spectacles produce upon the sophists would be unaccountable, if one had not perceived that they were associated with a deep religious feeling, the attempt to recall which produces in minds that detest God, those paroxysms, which are supposed to arise only from the pain which all indications of a popular and barbarous taste occasion in persons of delicacy and philosophic refinement. When brought unexpectedly in presence of these innocent representations, they rail like the demoniac who came out from the tombs, and sometimes might be observed to use almost his words: "*Quid mihi et tibi est, Jesu Fili Dei altissimi? obsecro te ne me torqueas.*"\* There were other spectacles exhibited in the middle ages to which I shall merely allude. Those professedly ludicrous, though associated with solemn forms, were offensive abuses against which the clergy loudly protested. Contemporary writers speak of them with the utmost abhorrence, and yet perhaps they were only the indication of a natural disposition which belongs to men in their noblest state, which merely required to be directed and moderated. Müller speaks of the inclination of the Doric race to mirth and merriment, under which a very serious character was frequently concealed;† and, in fact, when these diversions of the middle ages are described, we might imagine that we were reading of those sports of the Lacedemonians which mingled in the same breath the grave and solemn lessons of philosophy, and the most ludicrous mimicry and buffoonery. Persius, the disciple of the Stoic sect, made Sophron the mimographer, the model of his satires; and the grave and philosophic Sparta was the only Greek state in which a statue was erected to laughter. Religion, indeed, would have the right to reject such a plea in mitigation of sentence, but when human wisdom proudly inveighs, we may, in justice to the character of the middle ages, reply, with the historian of the Doric race, that among that people the strictest gravity was found closely united with the most unrestrained jocularly and mirth; in the same manner as the modern society can lay claim to neither; for as every real jest requires for a foundation a firm, rigorous, and grave disposition of mind, so moral indifference and a frivolous temperament not only destroy the contrast between gravity and jest, but annihilate the spirit of both.

---

\* Luc. viii. 28.

† Hist. of the Dorians, Book iii. c. 10.



## CHAPTER V.

RETURNING now to matters of more interest, we should observe that from the very nature and origin of the Christian religion, there was clearly no inconsistency between its principles and the possession of human learning. Truth admits of no separations or exclusions. In the first astonishment of the awakening soul of men and of nations, when apprised of the advent of the Son of God, it was indeed to be expected that there would be a temporary suspension of all intellectual exercise, and a total obliteration from the memory of all former and perishable things; but the universal and continued indulgence in such a quiescent state would, beyond all doubt, be contrary to the order of Providence, and opposed to the intentions of the Divine announcement. They who had been permitted to see the end of all perfection were at the same time made sensible that the commandment was very broad. The interests of truth sometimes required the employment of learning to illustrate and confirm it, and the Divine promises sanctioned the enjoyment of its advantages in declaring that the meek should possess the earth. St. Clemens Alexandrinus was the first among the Christians to attack the profane authors with their own arms, and to make use of their learning. Origen followed in that track, but as St. Augustin says, "the faithful always accommodated what was good to their own use, wherever it was found. How much gold and silver," he says, "did the blessed martyr Cyprien carry away from Egypt? How much Lactantius? How much Victorinus? Optatus? Hilarius? We ought not to disdain what is good in the learning and arts of the heathens: *"imo vero quisquis bonus verusque Christianus est, Domini sui esse intelligat ubicunque invenerit veritatem."*\* St. Basil, treating expressly on the advantages to be derived from the learning of the Gentiles, found much to praise in Homer and the Pythagoreans. The Greek fathers, indeed, are known to have endeavoured to imitate the style of Demosthenes and Homer;† and the importance which they attached to the beauties of literature, may be inferred from that work of Apollinarius, Bishop of Laodicea, who, when Julian published his decree, forbidding the Christians to be instructed in ancient learning, in order to supply the faithful with a specimen of every kind of composition, according to the design of St. Gregory Nazianzen, formed the writings of the Evangelists and those of the Apostles into dialogues, in the style of Plato. Even St. Jerome had not omitted the study of the heathen writers, and in writing to Magnus, a Roman orator, he observes that the ecclesiastical writers who preceded him had always used this liberty. The passage in which he describes his ancient fondness for learning, is truly remarkable. "When I was young," saith he, "I was carried away by a wonderful ardour for learning, nor did I presume, like some others, to be my own teacher. I heard Apollinarius at Antioch, and worshipped him, yet I would never

---

\* De Doctrin. Christiana, lib. ii. cap. 18. 40.

† Mabillon de Studiis Monasticis, pars ii. c. 15.

receive his contentious dogmas. When my hair became gray, and bespoke rather the master than the disciple, I went to Alexandria and heard Didymus. I was grateful to him, for I learned what I had not known before, and I did not lose from his teaching what I had before known. Men thought that I would make an end of learning, yet I proceeded again to Jerusalem and to Bethleem. With what labour and cost had I Bar-aninam for my nocturnal preceptor! for he feared the Jews like Nicodemus. Of all these men I make frequent mention in my works. Certainly Apollinarius and Didymus differ on many points, so that I was borne to one side and the other, for I confessed both of them as my masters! I have read Origen. If there be a crime in reading, I must confess myself guilty. Yet I never admitted his errors: his genius would never have displeased me. Lactantius writes a detestable sentence in his *Institutes*, yet who would forbid me to read that powerful work because of that one sentence? In like manner I may apply to Origen without fearing his poison. Physicians say that great diseases, being incurable, should be left to nature, lest medicaments should aggravate the evil. I have never sought, therefore, to transfer these errors of Origen into the Latin tongue, and to publish them to the world. Non enim consuevi eorum insultare erroribus quorum miror ingenia. If Origen were alive again, he would be indignant at you his admirers, who have made known his errors; and he would say with Jacob, ‘odiosum me fecistis in mundo.’ Let us not imitate his vices whose virtues we cannot follow. But the books of Origen may be read with profit for their learning and useful matter, and they who object to this should remember, that if there be a woe against those who call evil good, there is also one against those who call good evil.”\* It is a modern discovery that the Christian literature of early ages is unworthy of the attention of scholars. Petrus Crinitus, the friend of Politian and Pious of Mirandola, says “that he cannot express with what delight he studies the Greek and Latin fathers, for their writings seem to him to be treasures in which there is such a varied and multifarious learning and knowledge of all things, that they contain nearly all laws and sentences of philosophy, and nearly all antiquity.”† The tragedy composed by St. Gregory Nazianzen, of which I have already spoken, shows how early it was the desire of the Christians to avail themselves of the beauties of heathen literature. We do not find them paying any attention to the medium through which they might have to pursue intellectual riches. The celebrated Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II. studied for three years at the Moorish university of Cordova, where the sciences of mathematics and medicine were cultivated with great success. It was this pope who introduced the use of the Arabic figures into Christian Europe. St. Augustine scrupled not to make use of the writings of Tichonius, a Donatist; and Mabillon, in his treatise on monastic studies, recommends the *Prolegomena* of Walton, and the proofs of Christianity by Grotius, and proves that it is consistent with the monastic duties to consult the writings of heretics, when they contain nothing contrary to truth.‡ Of the importance attached to learning in the estimation of men, during the ages

\* Epist. lvi. xli.

† De honesta Disciplina, lib. viii. 1.

‡ Tractat. de Studiis Monast. Præfat. pars ii. cap. 2. § 2.

of faith, we have evidence in almost all the ecclesiastical monuments which have come down to us. We find St. Augustin exposing the folly and criminality of certain enthusiasts, who were for dispensing with the trouble of learning languages, from expecting a particular inspiration, and even for despising all who did not pretend to it as deprived of the grace of the Holy Spirit. "Let us not tempt Him in whom we believe," says the holy Augustin, "lest being deceived by such craftiness of the enemy, we should become unwilling even to enter the churches to hear the Gospel, or to attend to any man reading or preaching, being inflamed with the hope of being carried up to the third heaven like the Apostle, there to hear ineffable words, and there to see our Lord Jesus Christ, and from him, rather than from men, to hear the Gospel. 'Caveamus tentationes superbissimas et periculosissimas.'"<sup>\*</sup> St. Jerome, too, reproves certain persons who condemned him for his application to learning, and who esteemed themselves as saints because they knew nothing.<sup>†</sup> "Join yourself to a virtuous, tractable, and learned man," is the advice of an ascetic writer of the middle ages.<sup>‡</sup>

The decay of learning, during the convulsions which attended the invasion of the barbarians, was regarded as a great calamity by the Christian clergy, whose affecting lamentations over the fall of letters, were a proof how highly they esteemed them. St. Gregory of Tours, in the preface of his history says, "the study of letters and of liberal sciences, perishing in the cities of Gaul, amidst the good and the bad actions which were there committed, while the barbarians were given up to ferocity, and their kings to fury, while the churches were alternately enriched by devout men and plundered by the infidels, there has appeared no grammarian, skilful in the art of dialectics, to undertake the description of these things in prose or verse, so that many men lament, saying, Woe to us! the study of letters perishes among us, and there is no one who can record the facts of this time; seeing that, I have thought it right to preserve, although in an uncultivated language, the memory of past things, that future men may be made acquainted with them." The promotion of learning was a constant object of solicitude with the sovereign pontiffs. "We are bound," says Pope Alexander III. to Peter Abbot of St. Remé, "to provide with so much the more care for the convenience of learned and devout men, as the fruit and utility are great which result from their labours to the churches of God." And in a subsequent age we find that it was the Roman pontiffs who encouraged the learned scholars, who devoted themselves to searching for precious manuscripts, like Poggio, the successive secretary to eight popes. Nicholas V. promised five thousand ducats to him who should produce a manuscript of St. Matthew in Hebrew, and he made Rome an asylum for the learned men of the East, when they fled from the Mahometans, carrying with them their literary treasures. It was the popes who assisted and supported the first printers, as the workmen of Faust and Schoeffer, on their removal to Rome. It was a pope, the great St. Gregory, so falsely accused of having burnt the library of Mount Palatine, which must have perished long before his time, who was the patron of scholars

<sup>\*</sup> De Doctrina Christiana Prolog.

<sup>†</sup> Epist. xxv.

<sup>‡</sup> Thom. de Kempii Hortulus Rosarum, 1.



throughout the universal church. Of the wide diffusion of learning, during the middle ages, the generality of modern writers seem not to be aware, nor, on the other hand, of the very confined limits within which its influence extended before the rise and propagation of the Church. At the commencement of the Christian era, we find that books were so scarce, and the means of communicating them so scanty, that the greatest writers were often unknown to their contemporaries. Thus Strabo is not once quoted by Pliny or by any other contemporary naturalist, nor is Aretin by Galen. It is probable that they were not aware of each other's existence. Whereas in the middle ages, in the vast society of the Church, by means of communication with Rome, and the intercourse which was carried on between monasteries, learned and holy men, though separated at the greatest distances, were known to each other, and Europe became one immense republic of letters. Schlegel shows that from the time of Charlemagne manuscripts were multiplied in the West with more profusion than they had ever been in the most polished times of antiquity, so that the writings of Greece and Rome were now studied and commented upon in remote and desolate regions, to which, if it had not been for the ecclesiastical society, their fame would have never reached. We find the monk of Melrose, who wrote a chronicle of that abbey, quoting the fourth book of Aristotle de Animalibus, and the eighth of Pliny's Natural History. In the fifth and sixth centuries, amidst the dreadful shock of the fall of the Roman empire and the desolation of Europe, by the barbarous hordes, Ireland, from its situation, as Baron Cuvier remarks, being at a distance from the ruin, became the asylum of learning, and monks from Ireland then proceeded to carry back the torch to the devastated regions of Gaul and Germany. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that the ancient learning at any time wholly perished in any part of the empire. St. Augustin speaks of the wide diffusion of the Latin language as an event miraculous, and a result of the special providence of God to facilitate the work of evangelizing the nations. In the fourth and fifth centuries, the Latin was spoken in all the Gauls to the Rhine, as well as in Spain and Italy. So late as the time of St. Bernard, the people generally understood Latin; and Mabillon places it among his questions, whether the sermons of St. Bernard were originally composed in the Latin or in the Romance. There was in Europe, as a modern French critic observes, a kind of intellectual republic, which was styled "omnis Latinitas." It is certain that St. Bernard sometimes preached in Latin, and his secretary says of him, that his eloquence and wisdom are celebrated "through all Latinity." Yet he preached also in the Roman wallon, or language of the country. In the seventh and eighth centuries it was in Latin that even popular songs were composed. When Clotaire II. gained a victory in the north of France, his army celebrated it by a Latin song.

It appears, from the Life of St. Eloy, by St. Ouen, that in the seventh century the upper classes of Rouen were familiar with Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Herodotus, and Homer, with Cicero, Sallust, Livy, Virgil, Menander, Plautus, Horace, Solinus, Varro, and also with other authors, of whom we have now nothing but the catalogue of their writings.\*

---

\* See Recherches sur l'Hist. Relig. et Lit. de Rouen, 41.

St. Gregory of Tours relates that King Gontran, making his entry into Orleans, was received with greetings in Syriac and in Latin; for in consequence of commercial relations, the oriental languages were then taught in the schools of Paris. The chronicles of these ages speak of many saints who were skilled in the Roman law. At the end of the seventh century, St. Bonet, Bishop of Clermont, was learned in the decrees of Theodosius, and St. Didier, Bishop of Cahors, from the year 629 to 654, applied himself to the study of the Roman law. The tenth century is that age of deplorable fame which is said to have been involved in extreme darkness,—insomuch, that the heretics have made it a ground to deny the perpetual and uncorrupt transmission of the doctrine of the Church. Mabillon, aided by his unbounded learning, examines the history of this period, and comes to a result widely different from theirs: he even proves that the complaints of Cardinal Baronius\* can only be justified by a regard exclusively directed to the state of Rome and Italy at that moment; for that a view of the universal Church will demonstrate that, although there were then indeed many evils to be deplored, yet all things were not so deplorable but that there were some remains of ancient learning; nay, it will show that there were then many men of the most eminent sanctity and of sound learning, who were able to transmit the uncorrupt doctrine of the Church to posterity. No age is void of moral darkness. The holy Fathers in primitive times lamented the reign of wickedness and ignorance: this we too lament, and this our posterity will lament also; but never does the Church lose the savour of sanctity and of learning which she received from Christ.† Ignorance is the punishment of sin; but they who say this, continues the master of the sentences, should consider diligently, that not every one who is ignorant of something, or who knows something less perfectly, is therefore in such ignorance, or ought to be called ignorant; because that only should be called ignorance when what ought to be known is not known. Such ignorance is the punishment of sin when the mind is obscured with vice, so as not to be able to know the things which it ought to know.‡ This is a darkness which involved the race of men in no age of the Church's history; but the light of human learning in Italy was no doubt in the tenth century obscured, though even then, as Henrion justly remarks, the object of studies was good, since it embraced doctrine and morals, the only things in reality of which the knowledge is essential.¶ In the eleventh it broke forth again in the various congregations of learned Benedictines, the success of whose labours are acknowledged by the moderns themselves; but even in the tenth century other nations enjoyed greater learning: for, it is a mistake of Villemain, when he affirms that Italy had uninterruptedly remained more civilized than every other part of Europe.§ Spain, though oppressed under the yoke of the Arabians, beheld those great prelates, Gennadius of Asturia, Attilanus Zamorensis, Sisenand and Rudesind of Compostello; and the state of the Church with regard to learning, in Germany, France, England and Ireland, was

---

\* Ad. An. 900.

† Præfat. in V. Sæcul. Benedict. §. 1.

‡ Petr. Lombardi, lib. ii. distinct. xx.

¶ Hist. de la Papauté, tom. iii. 177.

§ Tableaux de la Littérature au Moyen Age, i. 97.

far happier. Bruno, brother of Otho the great, and Archbishop of Cologne in that age, is thus described in the chronicle of Magdeburg: "He was endowed with a great genius; he was great in learning, and in all virtue and industry. Being appointed by King Otho to preside over the untameable Lotharian nation, he delivered the country from robbers, he instructed it with legal discipline, he loved the flock committed to him, he saved many from error,—some, by assiduous disputations, leading to better things, and others, by maturity of learning, inflaming with a holy desire:—mild in speech, humble in learning, a destroyer of evils, an assertor of truth, gentle to the subject, severe to the proud, and fulfilling in his own life what he taught to others." Of Rotgerus, a German bishop in the tenth century, we read that he was versed in Greek and Latin, and that wherever he went he used to carry about with him his library, like an ark of the Lord.\*

Modern critics have remarked, that the prodigious number of books published during the twelfth century, attests the existence of a multitude of readers. They admit, that in the city and feudal life of those times, a great number of persons, of all classes, employed themselves in reading, and in reasoning on the books they read.† Even the Provençale poetry of the Troubadours, is not free from the influence of classical antiquity; for it contains some literal imitations from the Latin poets, and one Troubadour expressly cites Plato, Homer, and Virgil. That classical learning was at no time wholly neglected, might be inferred from the writings of many whom obscure fame hath concealed from ordinary readers;‡ but the compositions of distinguished men throughout the series of ages, place that point beyond question. To attempt to give an adequate idea of the learning of the clergy during the ages of faith, would be wholly inconsistent with the very narrow limits prescribed to this inquiry, and indeed it would be also on other grounds deserving of ridicule, since it would indicate great presumption in one who is himself without learning, to pretend to estimate that of others. It is not for a mere spy to feel ambitious to mount the horses of Achilles. Nevertheless, I fain would say something on this subject, not only because one feels as it were arrested irresistibly by the kind of solemn and romantic interest which is attached to it, but also in consideration of its extreme importance, independent of what is required to be shown in this place: for though many good men may be disposed to think lightly of such disquisitions, there is reason to believe that the strong hold of heresy in many heads consists in the opinion, that during the middle ages, men were ignorant to such a degree as to be incapable of distinguishing truth from error, history from fable.

When Mabillon published his *Treatise on Monastic Studies*, in which he proved the antiquity, universality, and great importance of the study of learning in the religious orders, the celebrated Armand de Rancé sent forth a reply, in which he disproved the necessity for such studies in members of the monastic order, and proceeded even to criticize, with considerable severity, that part which related to the conduct of the an-

---

\* Mabillon, *Præf. in V. Sæcul. Ben.* § 2.

† Villemain, *Tableaux de la Littérature au Moyen Age*, i. 307.

‡ Vide Heeren, *Geschichte des Studiums der Classischen. Litteratur im mittelalter*.



cient religious in the cultivation of the sciences. The facts, however, he did not disprove: and although he might feel that no obligation resulted from the example of such numbers of holy monks who had applied to learning, to music, and even to poetry, he could hardly have expected that the judgment of many readers would acquiesce in his suggestion, that these men must have forgotten death and judgment, because they had been anxious to procure a copy of Cicero's books, *de Oratore*, and the *Institutions of Quintilian*. At the same time it cannot be denied but that, independent of the object presented to us in this place, there would be more occasion for explaining on what grounds the elect children justified their cultivation of human learning,—though, to those who stand near the mountain, the answer is involved in no difficulty,—than for proving a fact which is so evident to every one conversant with the history of the middle age, that they did possess it in an eminent degree. It is, however, to illustrate the latter proposition that I am at present called upon. But to what order shall I first turn for examples? or what bright gems shall I select from the overflowing plenty in the intellectual treasury of the meek during the ages of faith?

Before I attempt to enter upon the subject, I would observe, that to a Catholic, not only the philosophical, as we shall see in another place, but also the literary history of the world, is prodigiously enlarged; objects change their relative position, and many are brought into resplendent light, which before were consigned to obscurity. While the moderns continue, age after age, to hear only of the Cæsars and the philosophers, and to exercise their ingenuity with tracing parallel characters among their contemporaries, the Catholic discovers that there lies, between the heathen civilization and the present, an entire world, illustrious with every kind of intellectual and moral greatness: the names which are first upon his tongue are no longer Cicero and Horace, but St. Augustin, St. Bernard, Alcuin, St. Thomas, St. Anselm: the places associated in his mind with the peace and dignity of learning, are no longer the Lyceum or the Academy, but Cîteaux, Cluny, Crowland, or the Oxford of the middle ages.

Perhaps I shall best discharge the office I have undertaken by abandoning all pretensions to an oratorical enumeration of illustrious titles, which need only be named to proclaim genius and wisdom in its utmost cultivation,—and by simply taking detached statements from the history and other writings of the middle ages, which will prove that, in whatever direction we look, we shall be sure to discover some eminent example of extensive and excellent erudition. Taking them then as they might occur to one who at hazard would open the ancient chronicles, how remarkable is this testimony of Bede, that Thobias, the Saxon Bishop of Rochester, could speak familiarly, not only the Latin, but also the Greek language? What an example is presented by the venerable Bede in his own learning! Barlaam, who first made the Italians acquainted with Homer, was a monk of St. Basil, who came from one of the seven convents which the religious of that order possessed at Rossano alone, where they cultivated the popular Greek dialect, which had remained in Calabria. What episcopal see, what holy monastery, during the middle ages, was not associated with the names

of men most illustrious for their love of letters? Who has ever fathomed that sea of learning in Dominic and Aquinas,

“ Whence many rivulets have since been turn’d  
Over the garden Catholic, to lead  
Their living waters, and have fed its plants ?” \*

The fact of the existence of libraries in the early monasteries, even in the days of St. Pachomius, is adduced by Mabillon in proof of the great antiquity of monastic studies.† Celebrated were the libraries of Lerins, of Tours, of Monte Cassino, of St. Germain-des-Près, where Dacherius was librarian when he compiled his *Spicilegium*, of Bobbio, which was so rich in ancient manuscripts, of Luxueil, of Corby, of St. Remi at Rheims, of Fulda, of St. Gall, of St. Emmeranus, at Ratispon, and of Einseidelin; in the last of which I have seen curious manuscripts of Bede’s works.

In England, our libraries are but of modern date; for the pseudo-reformers did not spare even those which they found in the Universities: but in the libraries on the continent before the French revolution, were collected the accumulated stores of the learning of the middle ages. In the abbey of Jumièges, the writings of Annon, its learned abbot in the tenth century, might have been found as he had left them. There were no less than seventeen hundred manuscripts in the abbey of Peterborough. The libraries of the Gray Friars in London, that of the abbey of Leicester, and that of the priory at Dover, contained noble collections, as did also those of Crowland, Wells, and many others. To these all persons had access. At Crowland it was ordained that the greater books, of which there were more than three hundred volumes, were never to be taken for the use of remote schools without license of the abbot; but smaller books, of which there were more than four hundred, such as Psalters, Catos, and Poets, might be lent to boys and acquaintances of the monks, but only for one day.‡ The magnificent library of the abbey of St. Victor at Paris, used to be open to the public during three days every week.¶ There were even public libraries attached to some parish churches. Baptist Goy, the first curate of the parish of St. Magdalen at Paris, left his libraries to the church, one for the use of the clergy of the parish, and the other for that of the poor parishioners.§ The library of Marucelli, at Florence, was founded by a virtuous prelate, for the use of such men of learning as were poor, as the inscription testifies—“*Publicæ et maxime pauperum utilitati.*” In the works of Petrus Crinitus,\*\* there is repeated mention of learned men,—Picius of Mirandula, Politian, and others,—meeting together in the Marcian library at Florence, to discuss questions of philosophy and literature. St. Louis, in the same manner, used to visit the public library which he had founded at the holy chapel in Paris, for the purpose of conversing with learned men. There is a character of learning and sanctity belonging to the very rooms which contained the ancient collections, as may be witnessed in the library of Merton at Oxford, and in that of St. Michel-in-Bosco, at Bologna; in which latter, over each department of books, was

\* Dante, *Parad.* xii.

† *Ingulph.* 105.

§ Lebeuf, *il.* c. 4.

‡ *De Studiis Monasticis*, Par. i. cap. 6.

¶ Lebeuf, *Hist. du Diocèse de Paris*, tom. ii. 5.

\*\* *De Honest. Discip.*

a noble painting of the principal writer belonging to it. Thus over the scholastic philosophy was seen the angelic disputing with the subtle doctor on the "universal à parte rei." The student of Rome, when he finds himself in the libraries of St. Augustin and of the Minerva, waited upon by the men of those venerable orders, seems of necessity to imbibe somewhat of the grave and holy spirit of Christian antiquity. Bede mentions the multitude of books that used to be brought from Rome to England by holy bishops on their return thence. St. Osmond, Bishop of Salisbury, who completed the building of that cathedral, collected thither men of learning from all parts, and retained as well as invited them by his liberality: he formed a library, and enriched it literally with the works of his own hands, transcribing books for it, and binding them himself. So again in the time of Pope St. Gregory VII. Herrand, Abbot of Ilsenburg, afterwards Bishop of Halberstadt, having founded a school at Ilsenburg for all liberal arts, and collected many learned men, made there a noble library, which was particularly rich in old histories.\* Of the abbot, William of Hirschau, we read, that he became when young most learned in all kinds of science, so as to surpass his preceptors, and that he mastered all the arts which are called liberal; † that he was skilled in philosophy, in dialectics, in music,—so that he wrote upon it,—in mathematics, arithmetic, and astronomy; that he procured copies of holy and profane books to be written out in beautiful letters, in which work twelve monks of the house sat daily employed. He used to send good men to govern other monasteries, many of which became celebrated in consequence, among which are reckoned that of St. Peter at Erfurt. There were above two hundred and sixty men in his abbey, who all loved and revered him. Mabillon desires his reader to consider what was the immense manual labour exercised by the Cistercians and Carthusians in copying manuscripts and writing them out for the public, in revising, and correcting, and collating the works of the holy fathers, and to consider too how all this was done in a spirit of humility, and pious fervour, and penitence, for the good of the church and the greater glory of God. "Be not troubled at the labour through fatigue," says Thomas à Kempis in addressing youth, "for God is the cause of every good work, who will render to every man his recompence, according to his pious intention, in heaven. When you are dead, those persons who read the volumes that were formerly written beautifully by you, will then pray for you: and if he who giveth a cup of cold water, shall not lose his reward, much more, he who gives the living water of wisdom, shall not lose his recompence in heaven." ‡

The collection of the Latin Fathers on vellum, written in the most beautiful characters, and illuminated with exquisite paintings, which is in the *Libraria Medicea* in the cloister of St. Lorenzo at Florence, or the splendid choral books and Bible, in twenty-two volumes, of the Carthusian monastery of Ferrara, will give an idea of the labour and admirable skill of the monks in this art. Albert was a monk of Cluny, distinguished for the number of beautiful books which he wrote out and bound. The Bible was covered with beryl stones: he had read it

\* Voigt's Hildebrand als Papst Greg. VII. und sein Zeitalter, 164.

† Chron. Hirsang. An. 1071.

‡ Doctrinale Juvenum, cap. 4.



through twice and corrected it twice, and at the end of his labour he fell at the feet of the seniors of Cluny, beseeching them to pray to God for him and for his father, that their sins might be forgiven them.\* Estates and legacies were often bequeathed for the support of the scriptorium of abbeys; at Montrouge, indulgences were given for the supply of books, and vestments, so that to that poor rustic church crowds of learned men and scholars used to come from Paris, to cast their little piece of silver or gold into the trunk appointed for the alms in behalf of learning. By the Pope's Bull, in the year 1246, which stated that the churches in Prussia and Livonia, being as yet infant, were unprovided with books, monks and other persons were invited to send them a supply of books out of their abundance, or to employ writers at their expense for furnishing them; and indulgences were extended on their complying.†

In the middle ages, books were generally bound by monks. Charlemagne, by charter, in 790, gave to the abbots and monks of Sithin, an unlimited right of hunting, in order that the skins of the deer should be used in making covers for their books. The prodigious number of volumes frequently composed by one writer in the middle ages, is constantly a subject of astonishment to those who visit libraries. The works of Albert the Great form twenty-two folio volumes! But one might account for this in the same manner as that in which Cicero explains the wonderful dispatch with which Pompey accomplished his naval projects, when he says, "Whence had he this incredible celerity? For he possessed no extraordinary power of impelling ships, no unheard-of art of navigation, no new winds; but the things which generally delay others did not detain him; no avarice diverting his course for objects of plunder, no lust carried him away to pleasure, no love of ease to delights, no fear of labour to repose."‡ It is to be remembered also, that the chief of a convent had often as many as fifty young men who studied under him, and who wrote out extracts for him. St. Peter the venerable abbot of Cluny, in the twelfth century, employed learned men to translate certain books from the Arabic. St. Raymond of Pennafort procured the Arabic and Hebrew tongues to be taught in several convents of his order; in the abbey of Tavistock, of which so many of the abbots were learned men, a regular course of lectures on the Saxon tongue used to be given, which was continued until the dissolution by Henry VIII.

It has not been sufficiently remarked with what care the monastic philosophers endeavoured to cultivate the barbarous idioms which arose upon the cessation of the Latin tongue. The only grammar of the Romance language was composed by Basil Maier of Baldegg, a monk of Einseidelin.§ During the conquests of the Teutonic order in the North, it is the bishops who are found insisting upon the importance of cultivating the national idiom, in order to instruct the people in the precepts of the orthodox faith.§ In Italy, the professed champions of the vulgar tongue went so far as to condemn the study of Greek and Latin, as

\* Chronicon Cluniacensis, x.

† Pro Lege Manilia, 14.

§ Voigt. Geschichte Preussens, iii. 146.

† Voigt. Geschichte Preuss. ii. 491.

§ Tschudi Einseid. Chronic. 172.

the dialogues of Speroni the Paduan, in the sixteenth century, can testify.\* But probably, while poets and fine writers were condemning the clergy for the importance which they attached to the ancient languages, they would have been found, under many circumstances, as in Ireland, perfectly willing that the national tongue of one country should be sacrificed to that of another, which, however, would have been not the less preserved without their co-operation, as it was there by bishops, priests, and friars. Mabillon observes, that we owe the histories of England and of many other kingdoms, almost solely to the Benedictine monks.† Especial regard was paid by them to the studies connected with history. Matthew Paris says, that in every royal monastery in England there was one learned and diligent scribe, who used to note down all the actions and events of each reign, and that on the death of the king, this account was referred to a general chapter, to be examined, and afterwards it was inserted in the chronicle, which was to transmit them to posterity. We should have been always children in our national history but for the writings of Bede, Ingulphus, William of Malmesbury, Matthew of Westminster, and Matthew of Paris. In the same manner we are indebted for the history of France to Odo of Vienne, William of Jumièges, Oderic Vitalis, and other monks; for that of Italy, to Paul the deacon, Erkempert, Leo Marsicanus, and Peter the deacon; and for that of Germany, to the abbot Reginon, Wilichind, Lambert of Ascenburg, Ditmar, and Herman. "In our schools," says Mabillon, "were taught all branches of learning, but every other study was referred to that of the sacred Scriptures and of the holy Fathers." Whenever the atrocity of wars did not impose silence on the Muses, those ancient academies were schools of eloquence as well as of virtue. The profane authors were studied with the sole limitation of excluding what was immoral. Thus St. Anselm, writing to Maurice, prescribed to Arnulphus that he should read Virgil and other authors, "exceptis his, in quibus, aliqua turpitudine sonat." Celebrated was the learning of Gerbert at the time when he only taught in the cathedral school of Rheims, where he had for his pupils King Robert and the Emperor Otho III. and Fulbert, who became such a learned priest. Mabillon shows, that the joys and sweets of study might, without scruple, be possessed by monks, who, for the sake of recreation, might read voyages, elegant orations, or heroic poems. The books of Virgil were under the pillow of St. Hugo VI. Abbot of Cluny, though he had a dream which represented the fables of poets as a poison.‡ Yet his judgment probably outweighed it. St. Augustin makes use of a verse of Virgil to illustrate a mode of expression in the holy Scriptures.||

We find that no branch of learning was disdained by the monks. Among the fathers of Italian literature, Pignotti acknowledges many Tuscan monks of the Dominican order, from whose works, he says, even at the present day, the students of the language imbibe the purest draughts of learning, such as Bartholomew of St. Concordio, Beato Giordano, a famous preacher, Dominico Cavalea, equally celebrated for

\* Dialogo delle Lingue.

† Bibliotheca Cluniacensis, 423.

‡ De Studiis Monasticis, i. 16.

|| Enchiridion, cap. 13.

his divine eloquence, and Jacob Passavanti, who, besides being a most admirable preacher, gave lectures upon philosophy and theology in various cities. It was this friar who directed the building of the church of Santa Maria Novella: but his sermons, his theology, and philosophy, have all disappeared, and his Mirror of true Penance alone remains,—an ornament of the language, being written first in Latin and afterwards translated by himself into the vulgar tongue. The works of these theologians enjoy the double advantage of teaching at once Christian truths and elegance of style. The precepts sweetly penetrate the heart with a soft unction: and such is the beauty of the language, that we seem to hear the most eloquent fathers of the church.\*

In the beginning of the ninth century, John Scotus, named Erigenus, from his country Erin, or Ireland, which was then renowned throughout the west for its learning, had travelled as far as Greece through his ardour for philosophic studies. “I did not fail,” he says, “to visit every place or temple where the philosophers used to compose and deposit their secret works, and there is not one of the learned men, who had any knowledge of their philosophical writings, that I did not question.”† He resided at the court of Charles-le-Chauve, who invited many learned men from Ireland and from the Anglo-Saxons, insomuch, that instead of saying, as before, “schola palatii,” men used then to say, “palatium scholæ.” John Erigenus, as the chief of this school, used to lecture on Plato and Aristotle, the former of whom he called the greatest of the philosophers of the world, and the latter, the most subtle inquirer among the Greeks as to the diversity of natural things.‡ He was profoundly versed in Greek, and probably in Hebrew, so that, at least, on the ground of his extensive learning, we may be allowed to mention him. With the same reserve one may also allude to Abailard, though his blessed end may free his memory from every dark association. This extraordinary man was said by his contemporaries to have been ignorant of nothing in heaven or on earth, excepting himself. Peter of Cluny, who used to call him the Socrates of the Gauls, put these words upon his tomb: “Ille sciens, quicquid fuit ulli scibile.” Heloisa had studied under him philosophy and theology, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Of Alcuin I shall speak shortly; but there are names less renowned that one ought not to pass over in silence. Leon, of Ostia, who wrote the voluminous Chronicles of Mount Cassino, by order of the Abbot Orderic, in the eleventh century, has merited the highest praise of Baronius and Dupin; Eginhard, the secretary of Charlemagne, Paul, the deacon of Aquileia, whose life was spared when convicted of a conspiracy against the emperor, on consideration of his learning, William, Archbishop of Tyre, and James of Vitri, are historians of whom the most cultivated age might be proud. A German monk, who lived in the middle of the eleventh century, Lambert von Affschenbourg, wrote an admirable history of the wars of Italy against the empire, in a style imitated from the great models of antiquity; he had studied in his convent Livy, Tacitus, and Sallust. At the end of the tenth century, amidst wars and disorders, the monk Gerbert, in the monasteries of

\* Hist. of Tuscany, ii.

† Wood Hist. et Antiquit. Oxon. lib. i. 15.

‡ Jean, Erig. de Divisione Naturæ, i. c. 33. 16.



Aurillac and of Bobbio, was studying the most precious manuscripts of Latin antiquity, and some even that we possess not; he was studying metaphysics, geometry, history and literature; he was inventing works of ingenious mechanism, and exchanging them for manuscripts. "We do not send you the sphere," he writes to one of his friends, "it is not a thing that costs little labour amidst so many occupations. If, therefore, you are very earnest in these studies, send us the volume of the *Achilleid* of Stacius, carefully transcribed; with that present, you will be able to draw this sphere from me, which you can never procure gratis, on account of the difficulty of such a work." The zeal of Lupus, Abbot of Ferriers, in the ninth century, induced him to write to the pope, to request that he would send him a copy of Quintilian, and of a treatise of Cicero. His correspondence with other abbots respecting the loan of manuscripts is highly curious. One friend having sent to borrow a manuscript, Lupus sends back the messenger without giving it to him, because, though a monk and trustworthy, he was travelling on foot. In the thirteenth century the Dominican and Franciscan orders produced men of most remarkable genius and learning. Baron Cuvier says that it is really astonishing to reflect upon what was written by Albertus Magnus, Vincent of Beauvais, though he was of Burgundy, who composed an immense *Encyclopædia*, St. Thomas Aquinas, that meek master of the sapient throng, and Roger Bacon; for though the latter composed but comparatively small treatises, they are full of genius, and evince a most extraordinary spirit of discovery. It may be well to compare this language of a great modern naturalist with that of some Catholic historians. The learning of the Franciscans was celebrated. Monteil says, that there was justice in the old proverb, "*parler Latin devant les Cordeliers*."\* Dugdale says, that the Franciscan order has yielded so immense a number of men renowned for learning and piety, that it is impossible to mention them;† and he states, that in England many extraordinary men proceeded also from the schools of the Augustinians.‡

Notwithstanding the zeal which was evinced for manuscripts, the monks are accused of neglecting, and, in consequence of the scarceness of parchment, of cancelling them, though it is not probable that the latter was ever done with that reckless disregard for the intrinsic value or rarity of the original, which some modern writers suppose. It does not appear that the publishers of the manuscripts of the classics accused the monks of neglecting them. Petrarch only says to his brother, "If I am dear to you, charge some faithful and learned man to travel through Tuscany, and to search the shelves and chests of the monks, and other men of instruction, in hopes of producing something to allay my thirst." It is true they speak of dark corners and iron clasps, but it is only to give an air of greater importance to their own activity, and not to censure the monks who had them in possession. The description which Benvenuto da Imola gives of the visit of Boccaccio to Monte Cassino, in which he says that the library was left open, that the books were covered with dust, some of them torn and defaced, and that the grass was

\* Hist. des Français, tom. iii. 395.

† Ib. vol. ii. 224.

‡ Monast. Anglic. vol. ii. 6.

growing in the windows, besides that the sum of its testimony amounts to little, contains intrinsic evidence of having been written with a hostile mind. "Fast shut and with great care the library of sacred books is to be preserved," says a writer of the thirteenth century, "from all defilement of dust, from fire and from damp, from thieves and from the sound of clamour, from clay off the feet and from the corrosion of worms, from all stain and rent of leaves. He is not worthy to read a sacred book who knows not how to take care of it, and who neglects to put it back in its proper place. Thus must be preserved the treasury of the church, made and edited by holy doctors, written and collected by good writers, and provided by God for the consolation of many."\* That only one copy of Tacitus should have been found in an old chest in the monastery of St. Gall, is no proof that the ancient learning would soon have perished through culpable neglect, since manuscripts of that author were always scarce, and one instance of carelessness will not justify an universal charge, not to remark that the searchers for manuscripts, like hunters, were no doubt often guilty of exaggerating their difficulties. Chateaubriand says he does not remember to have found in any catalogue of the ancient monasteries of France a single copy of Tacitus. The Benedictine monks of Corby possessed the first five books of his Annals.† The only manuscript of Phedrus that existed was in the library of the cathedral of Rheims. It appears even that the condition of the copies of manuscripts in one monastery would be known to monks living in another. Peter the venerable abbot of Cluny, writing to Guigo, prior of a Carthusian monastery, and sending him some books, assigns as his reason for not sending with them the tract of St. Hilary upon the Psalms, that he had found in his own copy the same corruptions as existed in that of the Carthusians.‡ In erasing Cicero's book, *De Republica*, to write upon the parchment St. Augustin's Commentary on the Psalms, it may be conceived how naturally they might conclude, that they were substituting a work of incomparably superior value, and they would hardly have supposed that the former would not come down to posterity, since so much of it was preserved even in the writings of Lactantius and other fathers. On the invention of printing, the monks were the first to appreciate its value and importance. In the year 1474, a book was printed by the Augustin monks of a convent in the Rhingau. The first patrons of Caxton were Thomas Milling, Bishop of Hereford, and the Abbot of Westminster, in which abbey he established his printing-office. The first printing press in Italy was in the monastery of St. Scholastica at Subiaco, the productions of which are sought after with such avidity on account of their extraordinary beauty. It was the Bishop of Holun who enabled Mathison to introduce printing into Iceland. In the year 1480 a printing press was established in the Benedictine monastery of St. Alban, of which William Wallingford was the prior. John Whethamstede, abbot of that house, was celebrated for his love of learning. Soon after the introduction of printing, another press was established in the abbey of Tavistock, where the printer was a monk, Thomas Ryehard.

---

\* Thom. de Kempis *Doctrinale Juvenum*, cap. 5.

† Mabil. *Præfat.* in iii. *Sæcul. Bened.* § 4.

‡ S. Petri ven. *Epist. lib. i.* 24.

Along with this prodigious discovery for the propagation of learning, appeared that admirable society of fervent disciples of our Lord, who demonstrated the art of combining the interests of piety with those of learning, not only exercising, but even teaching it, as in the incomparable work of Father Jouveny, the *Ratio discendi et docendi*. Among the first fathers of the society, Salmeron, at the age of twenty-one, Laynez at twenty-four, and Bobadilla at twenty-six, had acquired such learning, that they were the admiration of the court of Paul III.; and Bellarmin, before the age of thirty, had composed seven learned controversial treatises. Tolet and Vasquez, at the age of twenty-five, began to be the oracles of the universities of Spain. But the services of the Jesuits in multiplying editions of excellent books have never been appreciated; though independent of all other benefits, that work alone gave them an unquestionable title to the gratitude of Christians in all future ages. Of the love which men bore for learning during the middle ages, we have many curious and memorable instances. The Abbot Lupus, in a letter to Einard, says, "The love of letters is innate in me almost from the first days of boyhood." His love of learning induced him to travel into Germany to Fulda, not in order to learn the German language, but "that he might feed his soul with sacred study and erudition."\* St. Liudger, when a child, used to make imitations of books with the bark of trees, and with them to form a little library. When a youth he travelled to many countries for the sake of attending the lectures of learned men; and on his return from York into Saxony he carried with him a quantity of books. John of Salisbury, in a letter to Count Henry says, "that in his late interview with Peter, Abbot of St. Remy, that holy man had affirmed that nothing was sweeter to him in life than to converse with men of letters upon subjects of learning."† Richard of Bury, Bishop of Durham, in the thirteenth century, was celebrated for his love and encouragement of literature. Besides having libraries in all his palaces, it is related that the floor of his common apartment used to be covered with books, so that it was no easy matter to approach him. St. Bonaventura, on account of his singular virtues and most admirable learning, having been offered the archbishopric of York in England, begged of the pope, Clement IV., to permit him to continue in his evangelical poverty to serve the holy church by his studies of holy Scripture and divinity. Let us be satisfied, without demanding further evidence, and confess that we have no reason to accuse the middle ages on the ground of their neglect of learning. Is it for the present race of men to boast of being the first to appreciate the value of books, when their type of a great sovereign exhibited one, who for a mere political and commercial trick exported from the coast of France the contents of some of the richest libraries in the world, consisting of superb Benedictine editions, and of vast treasures of ancient books, which had been plundered from the monasteries during the revolution, and then piled up in churches till they reached the very roof, for the express purpose of casting them into the sea, in order that the ship might take in coffee and sugar in their place?‡ Who now loves learn-

\* Mabillon, *Præfat. in iv. Sæcul. Benedict.* § 8.

† Joan. Saresberiensis, *Epist. clxxii.*

‡ In the year 1809.



ing on its own account? May not this age, notwithstanding all its pretended freedom, supply posterity with matter for another treatise, like that of Lucian, on men of learning in pay of the great? what writer is not now, at least, in pay of the public? and when was learning more independent than during the middle ages? Of how many branches of learning might we not say, what one of the greatest natural philosophers of the present age affirmed of science, that "there are very few persons in England who pursue it with true dignity: it is followed as connected with objects of profit."\* The writers of Catholic times were never drudges for vain man's applause, or for base lucre. Not for the world's sake, for which now they toil who send forth lying books, but for the real manna grew they mighty in learning. Letters are, indeed, professedly cultivated, and spoken of with admiration; but where are they seen to act upon minds with that real power which they exercised during the ages of faith? where is there now a student, like St. Edmund, or a master, like Bede, who used to be so excited by his reading, and moved to compunction, that often while he was reading and teaching he used to burst into tears?

"Consider the happiness and content of a scholar's life," says the author of the meditations which were compiled for the English College at Lisbon. "The pleasure of learning is most pure and ethereal, most constant, gathering strength with her increase; finally most secure and honourable without any danger of foul wretchedness, blemish of fame, or breach of friendship; whereas all other pleasures are gross, tumultuous, and sordid. In point of dignity too scholars have the pre-eminence; for there is no man but laughs at a fool how rich soever, and in his heart respects a scholar though never so poor."† Thus wrote these holy men, whose pathetic statement of the prospects which then awaited their students on their return to England, where so many were martyred, cannot be read without the deepest emotion. "None," say they, "but those who have had the experience can truly conceive the conditions and difficulties of this state." But who in our days of comparative facility in the pursuit of letters is found to speak with the same reverence and love for learning? Turn to whatever side we will, the utmost we can expect to hear is the language of Callicles. "I love to see a youth devoted to philosophy, but when a man continues to cultivate it, I deem him worthy of stripes; for however ingenuous he may be by nature, he becomes servile through study. For he flies from the centre of political affairs, and all the custom of forensic assemblies, hiding himself and whispering in some corner with three or four boys all his life; and never coming forward to sound forth any thing liberal or magnificent. Truly, O Socrates, I love you; and therefore I say to you that you are neglecting what you ought to meditate, and that you are moulding that generous excellence of your mind to a certain boyish form, and disqualifying yourself for all active and public affairs of life, and neglecting to exercise yourself in matters which would make you seem to be wise, and procure you fame and riches, and many other good things."‡ With what effect do we suppose such persuasions would

---

\* Sir H. Davy's *Consolations in Travel*, 1830.

† Part iv. c. 3.

‡ Plato *Gorgias*.

have been addressed to the studious inhabitants of cloisters and colleges in the middle ages, when it was known that a Divine blessing was on the man who had borne the yoke from his youth, who should sit solitary and hold his peace? But it will be said, these were all men separate to the church. The laity during this time were in a state of deplorable ignorance. No greater error than to suppose that they were. The evidence which has been already adduced of the wide diffusion of learning, might be still further strengthened, if we were to visit the places where one might least expect to find it; for we should frequently discover, even in the feudal castle, men of great erudition. It is said, that a single book often formed its library, which had the appearance of a piece of furniture, being enclosed within boards, locked up, and opened as a kind of sanctuary, from which during the long evenings of winter men used to read without ceasing: but one book then contained a great deal of matter, if we may judge from the compilations which have come down to us, and this is after all but an exaggerated picture of the little encouragement afforded to study by the habits of feudal life. Little favourable as they may have been to a constant fortuitous and desultory reading, which St. Bonaventura says, does not edify because it renders the mind still more rambling and unstable,\* still there were some points in which they were more in accordance with the interests of real learning than those of the modern society; for as letters have in them something generous, they inspire an aversion for exercises in which the mind does not participate; they render men, as Don Savedra says, solemn and melancholy, lovers of retirement, and averse to public employments, and such a disposition found many circumstances of feudal life as if peculiarly accommodated to its state. We are told, indeed, in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, that Lord Cranstoun's elfin page was surprised to find Michael Scot's book on the person of the wounded Sir William of Deloraine.

“Much he marvell'd a knight of pride,  
Like a book-bosom'd priest should ride.”

But the fact is, that great numbers of nobles and princes in the middle ages were men of considerable learning, fond of books; and many who were themselves without it, respected and encouraged it in others, like Theodoric, who was so passionately fond of learned men, though he could not even write his own name. Gaston Phebus, that celebrated knight and feudal prince, was so attached to learning that he formed a collection of Greek, Latin, and Italian authors; and it is to the education which she received at his court, that historians ascribe the admirable beauty of the writings of Clotilde de Surville, which have been lately restored to light. De la Barre, the historian of Corbeil, says, “that Anthony Seigneur de Carnazet exalted the honour of his house by adding to the lustre of chivalry the glory of learning, and produced the fruits of his noble mind, in his discourses on morals to be the instruction of his children, having the courage to proclaim this truth, that science is more estimable than nobility, riches, strength, or valour.” The Secretary of Anthony de Gingins, President of Savoy under Duke Charles II., composed his *Mirouer du Monde*, while residing in the castle of

---

\* S. Bonav. *Speculum Novitiorum*, cap. 15.

that old nobleman in the country of Gex, at the foot of the Jura, where he found a library containing, as he says, many beautiful and exquisite books, such as Strabo, Ptolemy, l'Especcule Naturel of Vincent of Beauvais, Pliny, Albumasar, and others, from which he made extracts, and composed in the Gothic and French language this present book, entitled, *Le Mirouer du Monde*.<sup>\*</sup> François de Malherbe, on his return to Caen from his travels, during which he had resided at Heidelberg and Basle for the sake of attending the lectures of professors, delivered discourses in the public schools of the University of Caen, with his sword at his side, of which practice Huet gives other examples. Nicholas Vauquelin sieur des Iveteaux, author of the poem on the Institution of a Prince, delivered discourses publicly in the same university in the dress of a cavalier.† Even a gentleman of Gastine, in Poitou, who had no other theme but hunting, and the recollections of his youth, became distinguished as a writer in prose and verse, as in the instance of Jacques de Fouilloux, whom Gouget inserts in his history of French authors.‡ Gaufridus Bellus, the fourteenth Count of Angers, is described as admirable for probity and justice, and though engaged in the profession of arms, excellently learned and most eloquent among the clergy and laity.¶ Fulco the good, Count of Anjou, is said by the same historian to have been very learned, and a profound master of learning among brave soldiers. St. Odo, the second abbot of Cluny, relates that his father used to know by heart the histories of the ancients and the novels of Justinian, and that the evangelical words were constantly heard at his table.§ What learned nobles did England possess in Catholic times! how did the true sentiments of a Christian gentleman breathe in every line of the works of Antony Woodville, Earl of Rivers, as remarkable for goodness as for erudition! John Tiptoft, the learned and accomplished Earl of Worcester, was so great an orator, that at Rome he was said to have drawn tears from the eyes of Pope Pius II. On the flight of Edward IV. he was taken prisoner and beheaded. Caxton exclaims on this event, "O good blessed Lord God! what grete loss was it of that noble, virtuous, and well disposed Lord, and what worship had he at Rome in the presence of our holy fader the Pope, and so in all other places unto his deth; at which deth, every man that was there might learn to die and take his deth patiently." The learning of many of the Italians in the middle ages, has never been exceeded. Giannozzo Manetti, the Florentine, was one of the most learned men that Europe ever possessed: he spoke Latin, Greek, and Hebrew: he translated the whole of the Psalms from the original, and he wrote a book in confutation of Judaism, exposing their misinterpretations of the holy Scriptures. These sacred studies and the reading of the works of St. Augustin made him a theologian; he considered St. Augustin and Aristotle as the greatest men the world had ever seen; he had the whole work *De Civitate Dei* by heart, as also the *Ethics* of Aristotle, and the *Epistles* of St. Paul; and he asserted that theology ought to be the principal science of mankind. Raphael Maffei was another learned Tuscan of the fifteenth century: he passed the latter part of his life as a hermit in a cell covered with boards, sleeping upon

\* Gouget, *Bibliothèque Française*, tom. ix. 226.

† *Id.* xvi. 34.

‡ Dacher, *Spicileg.* tom. x.

† *Id.* tom. xvi. 111.

§ *Bibliotheca Cluniacensis*. 15.



straw, feeding upon bread and water, and a few vegetables: he finally renounced all profane erudition, and wrote only the lives of saints. He founded and endowed a monastery of nuns, under the title of St. Lino, and was himself regarded as a saint. The convents could bear testimony to the love of learning which animated numbers of noble laymen. It was in the spirit of that age, when Cosmo de Medicis enriched with a library the magnificent Abbey of St. Bartholomew, near Fiesole, and presented another collection of books to the convent of St. Francesco, which was not far distant from his Caffaggiolo, situated in a picturesque wood in the pleasing valley of the Mugello, resembling those delightful groves which the poetic imagination has ascribed to Arcadia. In an early age, Cassiodorus, who was blessed, as Gibbon says, with thirty years of repose in the devout and studious solitude of Squillace, carried with him to the monastery of Monte Cassino, his own extensive library. An Italian author remarks, that flattery has had no share in the elegant representation which adorns the hall of the palace Pitti, from the pencil of John Mannozi, where the Muses are painted as exiled from Greece, and meeting a courteous reception from that house; for the government of Florence was distinguished by the hospitable reception which it gave to the illustrious fugitives. When Raymonde Sebonde came into France, from learned and philosophic Spain, with the intention of visiting the University of Paris, he was stopped on his way by the city of Toulouse; for such was the enthusiastic admiration excited there by his renown, that the inhabitants forced him to remain, and absolutely detained him against his will. In the middle ages, were seen many kings who were men of learning and ardent admirers of all wisdom. What an admirable instance is that of Charlemagne surrounded by the eminent scholars whom he had collected from all nations. What a zeal did he evince for learning! "O! I wish," he exclaimed one day while conversing with Alcuin, "that I had twelve clerks as learned and instructed in all wisdom as were Jerome and Augustine!" when Alcuin replied, "The Creator of heaven and earth had not any more like them, and you wish to have twelve!" Such was the esteem in which letters continued to be held at the imperial court under another monarch, that the present of a book was received as an equivalent for a tax due to the crown. The abbot of Corby, in the year 847, wrote as follows to the king. "Instead of a present of gold or silver for this festival I send a book on the Eucharist, which although small in bulk, is great in consideration of the subject. I composed it for my dear disciple the Abbot Placide de Varin." No sovereigns encouraged learning with greater zeal than Louis-le-Jeune and Philippe-Augustus. King John of France in that feudal age, evinced a great love for learning, and to his orders the French owed their first translation of Livy, Sallust, Lucan, and Cæsar. Christine de Pisan, writing the life of King Charles V. in which she adheres most rigidly to truth, divides the work into three parts, which are entitled, on the Nobleness of Courage, of Chivalry, and of Wisdom, for learning entered then in the ideal of an excellent prince, and offered them titles which they valued more than those of their royal birth, as in the instance of Henry of England. By order of King Charles V. some of the finest treatises of St. Augustine, as well as the whole Bible, the greatest part of the works of Aristotle, Cicero, and many other au-

thors, were translated into French: and this king gave immense pensions to the learned men who were employed in these labours. Speaking of John the brother of Charles V. then Duc de Berry, Christine says, "Se délicate et aime gens soubtilz, soyent clerks ou autres, beaulx livres des sciences morales et histoires notables, moult aime et voulentiers en oit tous ouvrages soubtilment fais."\* Of his brother, Lewis, Duc d'Anjou, she says, "il amoit les chevalereux et les sages clerks;"† and of his fourth brother, Lewis, Duc de Bourbon, "aime et secuert les bons chevaliers et les clerks sages‡ en toutes choses bonnes soubtilles et belles se délicate; livres de moralitez, de la sainte Escripiture et d'enseignement moult luy plaisent, et voulentiers en ot, et luy mesmes par notables maistres en theologie en a fait translater de moult beaulx." Of Louis, Duc d'Orleans, son of King Charles V. she says, "that often there used to be before him many disputations of great congregations of wise doctors and solemn clerks, when many cases would be proposed and put in terms of diverse things, and that the memory and eloquence he used to evince on these occasions were wonderful, as he replied to each of the arguments, not in a high and fierce style of language, but mildly and all in peace, so that it was beautiful to witness it."|| King Charles V. was told on one occasion, that some persons had murmured against him for paying such honour to clerks, but he replied, "One cannot too greatly honour clerks who have wisdom: for so long as wisdom shall be honoured in this kingdom, it will continue in prosperity, but if wisdom should be ever thrust out it will fall away."§ The old writer, who collected the very joyous history of Bayart gives this testimony, that the Duke of Ferrara is a gentle and wise prince, "qui scet quasy tous les sept ars liberaulx et plusieurs autres choses mécaniques;"\*\*\* and that the duchess is a most triumphant princess, being beautiful, good, sweet, and courteous to all kinds of people, and so learned that she speaks Spanish, Greek, Italian, French, and a little very good Latin, in all which languages she can compose.†† The Duke of Nemours, he relates, passing through a little town named Carpy, remained there with his knights two days, and was very well received by the seigneur of the town, who was a man of great learning in Greek and Latin literature: he was cousin-german of Pious of Mirandula, and was styled Albertus Mirandula, Count of Carpy.‡‡ Pious of Mirandula, at the age of twenty-three, maintained at Rome certain theses, containing nine hundred propositions, drawn from Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Chaldaic authors. The Emperor Ferdinand III. spoke a great number of languages, and could answer every ambassador in his own tongue.|||| The learning of these high princes was indeed not always scholastic. It was sometimes acquired solely by intercourse with learned men. Thus the King Don Alonso of Naples used to retire after his repasts in the company of learned men, in order, as he used to say, to feed his mind after refreshing his body, and even Francis I. King of France, whose reign beheld a suspension of learning, without having studied in his youth, made himself, by means of similar conversation, qualified to speak on all subjects of importance. Christine de

\* Livre des Fais du Sage Roy Charles V. ii. chap. xii.

† Id. ii. 11.

‡ Id. ii. c. 14.

|| Id. ii. c. 16.

§ Id. part. iii. c. 14.

\*\* Chap. xlii.

†† Id. chap. xlv.

‡‡ Id. chap. xlvii.

|||| Savedra, Christian Prince, i. 51.

Pisan, mentions that King Charles V. did not neglect this method, for being circumspect in all things, as she says, in order to adorn his conscience, it pleased him often to hear at his collations masters in theology and divinity of all orders of the Church, having them around him and honouring them greatly, having in the utmost reverence every spiritual father or wise person, of just and salutary instruction.\* It would be hazardous to affirm that the chivalrous lords of feudal towers, like the modern sons of nobility, could always boast of having possessed a Phoenix for their governor, but unquestionably in Catholic times, the cloister supplied true sages, whose conversation was able to form great and good men to administer justice and govern their dependants with benignity and firmness. It remains to speak of the character of the learning which was thus diffused and ardently pursued during the ages of faith.

A modern French writer, treating on the fifth century, says, that not only did literature become wholly religious, but being religious it ceased to be what is generally styled literature. In the ancient time of Greece and Rome, men studied and wrote for the sole pleasure of studying, and of knowing how to procure for themselves and others intellectual enjoyment. Literature was devoted to the search of truth; and so, he might have added, it has again become, professedly, at least, in the modern societies in which men write and study, precisely as if no such fact as that of the Christian revelation had ever occurred; but during the ages of faith it was quite otherwise. Within the sphere of divinity and morals, men studied no more in order to search for truth, and acquire knowledge; they wrote no more for the sake of writing. Writings and studies assumed a practical character. Men only sought to convert and regulate the purely speculative character of philosophy; as, independent of religion, poetry, letters, and arts had disappeared. From not having well seized this character of the period, a false idea of it has been generally formed; men have concluded that it was a time of apathy and moral sterility, without any development of intelligences. But it is an error to suppose, that there was then no intellectual activity. On the contrary, adds this writer, there was much; only it was under a different form, and tended to different results. It was an activity of application. One is astonished at regarding a world of writings which attest the ardour and fecundity of those ages, and which still constitute a real and rich literature.† The leaves of modern books are exactly like a Protestant country, or some barbarous region where the light of Christianity has never shown; where all is secularized, and every image of religion effaced, excepting what belonged to the idolizing of nature. The old books introduce us, as it were, into a Catholic country, where amidst beautiful woods and wild mountains, we find monasteries, and crosses, and holy images of saints, constantly reminding us of our heavenly country. Men talk of literature becoming religious, as if that was an indication of its decline; and yet without the sanctifying influence of religion, when has learning ever assumed an amiable or even a dignified character? “*Postquam docti prodierunt, boni desinunt,*” said Seneca,‡ and Petrus Cellensis explains the invariable phenomenon connected with the manners of the learned, when he says,

---

\* Part i. c. 15.

† Guizot, *Cours d'Hist. Mod.* tom. ii.

‡ Epist. ii.



“*Literatura sæcularis inflat, si illam caritas non reprimat.*”\* But what a gracious tone did that charity impart to learning in the ages of faith? It is recorded of James, abbot of Villemoustier, in the eighth century, that if he ever heard one of his monks in reading place the accent on a wrong syllable, to spare the modesty of the reader, he never reprehended him at the time.† But not merely the style, the whole object and motives of learning were changed, “*Quid tota series literarum aliud indicat, quam te ea quæ sursum sunt sapere, non quæ super terram?*” says Peter the venerable abbot of Cluny, writing to his dearest brother Odo.‡ Mabillon shows that learning was to be cultivated with no other view but to render men more humble and charitable, more hidden to the eyes of men, and more sensible to the knowledge of God; more fervent to love him, and more diligent to serve him.¶ One was to study, but never in order to seem to be wiser or more learned than others.§ One was to write, but not for the sake of being always able to boast like Demosthenes, that he came forward in literature and science, in politics and theology, *περὶ πάντων καὶ μόνος*. It was often necessary to use much persuasion to induce men to publish their works. There is a letter from the Monk Petrus Pictaviensis to Peter the venerable abbot of Cluny, exhorting him to this effect. “I know that I am very bold in daring thus to advise you, but I trust in your piety that it will pardon me. For, beloved father, I fear not a little lest from declining all vanity in study you should wish too much to remain concealed under this intention. You ought to take care, most discreet man, lest by avoiding the praises of men with too much caution, you omit those things for which the faithful servant in the Gospel deserved to be praised by the good householder. Consider, I beseech you, that if the holy fathers had written nothing formerly, but had only passed a good life in silence, they would not have gained such a multitude of people to God, nor would they have left with us such a sweet and celebrated memory. The study of writing has always distinguished the abbots of Cluny from ancient times, so that if they do not write they have reason to blush for themselves as being degenerate and unworthy of their predecessors.”\*\* St. Anselm uses stronger language to encourage literary exertion. “There are some men,” he observes “ignorant sinfully, who say, what use to retain this little? I shall never become wise from so small a thing. All who are not learned will not perish. There are enough of wise men in the world, enough of learned writers. There is no need for me to fatigue myself: thus he speaks to his mind, and does not perceive that the ancient enemy suggests these things to him, that he may never study to be useful, that he may live in torpor and negligence, and so perish.”†† These men had but one object in their studies, “*In doctrinis glorificate Dominum,*”‡‡ the supremacy of which continued to be recognised till the last; for the first efforts of engraving and printing were employed to aid religion, of which we see examples in the *Biblia Pauperum*, and the *Speculum*

\* Petri Abb. Cellens, Epist. lib. ix. 7.

† *Historia Monasterii Villariensis*, lib. i. cap. 12. apud Marten. *Thesaur. Anecd.* tom. iii.

‡ Epist. lib. i. 13.

§ *De Imit.* lib. iii. 53.

¶† S. Anselmi de *Similitudinibus*, cap. 54.

¶ Tractat. de Studiis Monasticis Præfat.

\*\* *Bibliotheca Cluniacensis*, 620.

†† Isa. xxiv. 19.

Salutis, and the editions of the Latin Bible by Fust. All the learning, even of the laity, during the middle ages, partook of this sacred character. Fleury mentions that the young Emperor Theodosius had a good library of ecclesiastical books, and used to converse with bishops, almost as if he had been one of their order:\* and Christine de Pisan says, that King Charles V. of France was really a philosopher, that is, a lover of wisdom. He was a true inquirer after high primary things, that is, of high theology, which is the term of wisdom, which is nothing else but the knowledge of God and of his high celestial virtues; he desired to be instructed in this by wise masters, and he caused many books of wise theologians to be translated, “*et de théologie souvent vouloit oyr.*”†

The modern sophists condemn such learning in a prince, and require on the contrary that he should be instructed in the sciences of natural philosophy, as if a knowledge of botany or mineralogy were more conducive to perfect the art of wise government, than that of ethics and divinity, which would teach the end of all good government, the true interests of mankind, and what belongs to the various relations of men on the stage of the present life. How should the natural sciences constitute the proper learning for rulers, or legislators, or magistrates? Society is not in a better or worse condition for their opinion on physics being true or false; there are always men whom they may consult on such questions, but their error in religion or morals may involve whole generations in incalculable evils. The example of king Don Alonso is adduced by Savedra to prove the inutility of science in a prince, for he knew how to correct the disorders of the heavens, but not those in his state; he who, by the force of his genius, could ascend to the height of the celestial orbs, was not able to preserve a kingdom and an hereditary crown. The Sultan of Egypt, ravished at so glorious a renown, sent ambassadors to him loaded with presents, and almost all the cities of Castille, in the heart of his kingdom, refused to obey him. The religious studies of the middle ages taught men how to govern themselves, and therefore enabled them to rule over others. Men would not have deemed it possible, during the ages of faith, that the fact of a religious direction having been given to the studies of the laity, could be adduced in subsequent times in evidence of their having been barbarians. They would have shrunk in contempt, as well as in displeasure, from any learning which was otherwise directed. *Hæc et a pueritia legimus et discimus*, they would have confidently replied to any objectors who should have proposed a different kind of learning. *Hanc eruditionem liberalem et doctrinam putamus*. This was the learning, not for the priest alone, but for all Christians in time past, who, while they occupy themselves with learning, “*hanc amplissimam omnium artium benè vivendi disciplinam vitâ magis quam litteris persecuti sunt.*”‡ This was the learning of those masters of religion whom our ancestors revered, of whom we might justly say, in the words of the Roman orator, “that their wisdom seems to us so great, that those men are more than sufficiently prudent, who, we do not say follow their

\* Mœurs des Chrest. 307.

† Cicer. Tuscul. liv. iv. 3.

VOL. II.—10

‡ Livre des Fais, &c. Part iii. c. 3.

prudence, but who are able to perceive how great it was." Do men at present forget, that the reason, even of the ancient philosophers, would have dictated similar language? "Let us inquire what say the priests: for I confess that I am vehemently moved by the gravity of their answers, and by their one and constant voice. Neither am I that man who, if he should seem to be more than others versed in the study of letters, would take delight in or make any use whatever of such letters as would tend to withdraw our minds from religion." This, you reply, is the language of some bigoted disciple, when education was the monopoly of the priesthood during the dark ages. Nay, most profound critic, they are the words of Cicero.\*

But, even in a mere literary point of view, what was the character of the learning of the middle ages? Truly I do not see on what grounds the men of later times have reason to despise it. Philosophers enumerate three distempers of learning; the first, fantastical learning, the second, contentious learning, and the last, delicate learning: vain imaginations, vain altercations, and vain affections. Now I would ask these disparagers of the Christian school, whether, if we exclude these three kinds of learning, will there be found remaining such prodigious stores for the moderns to boast of, as to warrant their contempt for past ages? It is infinitely remarkable that Lord Bacon should have noticed this perversion of learning, as having been consequent upon what he calls the reformation: he admits that learning then became characterised by an affectionate study of eloquence: men began to hunt more after words than matter, and more after the choiceness of the phrase and the round and clean composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses, and the varying and illustration of their works with tropes and figures, than after the weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention, or depth of judgment. Then grew the learning of the schoolmen to be despised as barbarous; then were Cicero and Demosthenes almost deified, and young men allured unto that delicate and polished kind of learning, which induced Erasmus to make the scoffing echo, "*Decem annos consumpsi in legendo Cicerone*," and the echo answered in Greek "*οὐδ'—ἀσ.*"† Now whatever may have been the faults of the ancient learning, it at least never evinced the spirit or the tricks of the sophist or the pedant. "A good reader or student," says Vincent of Beauvais, "ought to be humble and mild, and ready to learn from all, and he never should presume on the ground of his knowledge, and he ought not to wish to seem to be wise before the time, pretending to be what he is not, and ashamed to appear what he is. He ought not to condemn instantly whatever he does not understand. This should be the discipline of readers.‡ There are some," he continues, "who wish to read all things, but the number of books is infinite. Be not desirous of following where there is no end or rest, and therefore no peace; and where there is no peace God cannot dwell. Philosophy rejects a fastidious stomach, and invites the cheerful guest to a simple supper of few but good meats. There is a great difference between seeing the thing itself and only the books; for books are only poor

\* Orat. de Haruspicum Respons. 9.

‡ Speculum Doctrinale, lib. i. cap. 28.

† Advancement of Learning.



monuments of knowledge, and contain only the principles for inquiry, which are to be pursued afterwards, and for that very purpose books are to be laid aside.”\* Mere book-learning distinguishes no great writer of the middle ages. “Some things which I have not found in books,” says John of Salisbury, “from daily use and experience of things, as if from a certain history of manners, I have gathered.”† The learning of the middle ages was Homeric, indicating personal acquaintance with men and things. Many of their great writers were themselves wanderers. Trithemius mentions a certain priest of Ireland, named Sedulius, a disciple from childhood of the Archbishop Hildebert, who might be said to represent them all, for he was a man exercised in the divine Scriptures, and most learned in literature, excelling in verses and prose, who left Ireland, passed into France and Italy, thence into Asia, and lastly, after visiting the shores of Achaia, returned to Rome, where he shone in admirable learning.‡ In the schools, indeed, were distinguished the *superseminati*, or those who were superficial, the *pannosi*, or those whose learning was all in scraps and collections of sentences, and the *massati*, or those who were solidly learned; § but even to the two former belonged the grace of humility, and the merit of a sound judgment, of which the proof may yet be witnessed in the collections made by them which have come down to us, as well as in works of their own composition. The admirable Phillipe de Comines confesses that he is a man “who has no literature, mais quelque peu d’expérience et sens naturel,” which the Abbé Gouget justly remarks, is worth far more than learning. A certain tone of noble simplicity, not unconnected with those manners of the feudal hearth, to which I before alluded, was observable in the writings of such men. It is this which seems so admirable in Joinville, and Froissart, and Olivier de la Marche, and a multitude of others, to whom the following distich of the poet Panormita, addressed to Leon Batista the Florentine, might with justice be applied by every judicious reader,

“Cum placeas cunctis, raris pro dotibus, idem  
Tu mihi pro verâ simplicitate places.”

One is struck also in all their compositions with that characteristic, which a distinguished critic of our times praises in Dante, that lively and respectful faith, that laical docility which reigns amidst the magnificent inventions of his imagination, and the boldest flights of genius. In general, the learning and style of the middle ages had a certain deep mysterious tone, unobtrusive, symbolical, and at an infinite distance from the pert familiarity and vulgar display which is so characteristic of modern literature. “This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard,” says Hippolita of the play, to whom Theseus replies in words that express the genuine spirit of all their beautiful and profound compositions :

“The best in this kind are but shadows :  
And the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.”§

But what could imagination do for the popular literature of the present

\* *Speculum Doctrinale*, lib. i. cap. 33.

† In lib. ii. de *Scriptoribus Eccles.*

§ *Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. 1.

† *De Nugis Curialium*, lib. vii. Prologo.

|| Heuffel, *Hist. Scholarum*, 376.

age? Men in these days would have disdained the domestic familiar muse of Euripides, who, it was said, never wrote any thing but what all the world could understand and perceive at the first instant, and from whose dramas men could learn better skill even in the commonest matters of household economy. The muse of the middle ages was that of Æschylus, and critics, like him described by Aristophanes, might object to their style, "that it was not sufficiently clear and continuous, but that its expressions were only scamandars, or trenches, or the insignia of shields, and broken words, which it were not easy to put together," like crosses, and holy sepulchres, and hooded heads, shrines, vigils, dirges, nocturns, templars, and chivalry. The wise poet of antiquity, however, leaves the clear popular writer in the shades, and brings back the dark and solemn Æschylus, to save his country by the maxims of his wisdom.\* With respect to books intended for general circulation, many historical works, of the most solid and practical philosophy, were composed in the middle ages, in a simple but condensed style, that united the brevity of Tacitus with the clearness of Livy. Such, for instance, was that history of the English schism, transferred to the Italian, with a truly Roman gravity, by Bernardo Davanzati, in the sixteenth century. That profound thinker and parsimonious speaker, who received from the academy of the Alterati the name of the Silent, was the first to show, in this curious history, that the language of Florence need yield to no other in brevity and weight. A most remarkable monument, though of a different kind, is the work which was composed by Paschasius Radbert, on the deeds of Wala, the Abbot of Corby, which, being written while the enemies of that holy man were alive, and during the reign of Charles the Bald, when it was dangerous to treat upon such a subject, fictitious names are employed, and the truth of history explained in the form of a dialogue, after the manner of Plato. Mabillon, who discovered this work, which he justly styles golden, in the library of St. Martin des Champs at Paris, inserted it in his Acts of the Benedictine Saints, where it stands an imperishable monument of the profound wisdom, the learning, the judgment, and the accurate knowledge of all human duties, combined with the deepest piety, which were possessed in the ninth century. Assuredly the author of this work stood in need of no useful knowledge that the men of our times could give him. Indeed, of the literary excellence of many writers of the middle ages some modern critics have had the courage to speak with justice. Guizot, for instance, concludes his review of Alcuin's writings in these words: "I regret that I cannot enter more fully into the examination of these monuments of so active and distinguished a mind. I seem as if I had but taken a glance at them, and if they were made the subject of our profound study, we should reap, without doubt, pleasure and advantage. In fine, this appears to me to be the general character of Alcuin and his works. He is a theologian by profession; the atmosphere in which he lives, and the public to whom he addresses himself, are essentially theological; and yet the theological spirit does not alone reign in him: it is also towards philosophy and ancient literature that his thoughts and works are directed. These also he desires to study,

---

\* Aristoph. Ranæ.

to teach, and to revive. St. Jerome and St. Augustin are familiar to him, but Pythagoras, Aristotle, Aristippus, Diogenes, Plato, Homer, Virgil, Seneca, and Pliny, are also in his memory. The greatest part of his writings is theological, but mathematics, astronomy, dialectics, and rhetoric occupy him habitually. It is a monk, a deacon, the light of the contemporary church, but at the same time it is a scholar, and a classical scholar. We see united in him an admiration, a taste, or rather a regret for the ancient literature, and the sincerity of Christian faith, the ardour to illustrate its mysteries and to defend its power." Of what learned and profound men might not the universities have boasted at their very commencement? What erudition appeared in the works of Gerson, John Raulin, Biel, Clavasius, and of innumerable others at Paris? in other universities, what great Platonists were beheld in Marsilius Ficinus, Hermolaus Barbarus, and Picus of Mirandula? What great astronomers in the Cardinal Cusa, George Purbach, Regio Montanus, and Walter? What Grecians and poets in Merula, the two Strozzas, the two Philelphes? What Latinists and poets in Mapheus Vegius, whom some compared to Virgil, Andrelinus, who composed such beautiful eclogues, Ugolinus, who celebrated the victories of Charlemagne, Ravisius Textor, the author of that fine dialogue between the Pilgrim and Death, Collatius, who sung the calamities of Jerusalem? What sacred orators in Maillard and Menot, the Franciscan friar, who declaimed in French against the scandals of their age? What profane orator in Jean Lefevre, who so eloquently defended an unfortunate prince? What historians in Paulus Emilius, the canon, who wrote a history of France in Latin, Robert Gaguin, who wrote a Latin history of the French monarchy, the two Chartiers, John and Alain, Froissart, and Monstrellet, Juvenal des Ursins, Mathieu Coucy, Le Bouvier, Nicole Gilles, Jehan de Troyes? What philologists in Annius, Ureus-Codrus, Angelo Politien, Beroaldus Brant, Alexander Min, respecting whose birthplace noble cities disputed? What lexicographers in Ambrose Calepin and Stephens? What grammarians in Valla, Lully, Niger, Sulpitius, Perotus, Tiphernes, Hermonius, Lascaris, Chrisoloras, Capnion, Andronicus, Dalmata, for whom kings and republics contended? What civilians in Alciatus, Chopinus, Corvinus, Marculfus? In fine, what universal geniuses, of whom Alphonso Tostatus, the Spanish divine, was so eminent an example, that he merited the epitaph,—

"Hic stupor est mundi, qui scibile discutit omne."

Examine the literature of these ages during any period, and take, for example, that which was produced in France alone from the fifth to the tenth century, and, as far as relates to the choice of subjects, it will be found more noble and philosophic, more conformable to the idea of literature, in the sense of Plato and Cicero, and of the ancients generally, than even that of the nineteenth, with its libraries of novels, memorials of robbers and of persons of profligate renown, and catechisms to teach children political economy and arithmetic. In the fifth century there flourished in France, Sulpicius Severus, who wrote the life of St. Martin of Tours, a sacred history, and dialogues respecting the monks of the East; Evargrus, who wrote disputations between Theophilus, a Christian, and Simon, a Jew, and a dialogue between Zachæus, a



Christian, and Apollonius, a philosopher; St. Paulin, Bishop of Nola, who wrote epistles and poems, and a discourse upon alms; Cassien, of Provence, who wrote a treatise upon monastic institutions, and conferences upon the monastic life; Palladius, of Poitiers, who wrote a poem upon agriculture; St. Prosper, of Aquitaine, who wrote a poem upon grace, and a chronicle or universal history; Mamert Claudien, of Vienne, who wrote a treatise on the nature of the soul, the hymn of the Passion, *Pange lingua*; Salvien, who wrote a treatise against avarice, and another on the government of God; Sidonius Apollinarus, Bishop of Clermont, who wrote poems and epistles; Faustus, who wrote a treatise on grace, and letters on points of philosophy and theology; Genade, of Provence, who wrote a catalogue of illustrious men, and a treatise on ecclesiastical doctrines; Pomærius, of Arles, who wrote a treatise on the contemplative life, and a treatise on the nature of the soul; St. Ennodius, of Arles, who wrote a panegyric of Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths, a life of St. Epiphanius, letters, poems, and theological tracts; St. Avitus, Archbishop of Vienne, who composed two sublime religious poems, besides epistles and sermons; St. Cæsarius, of Arles, who wrote a treatise on grace and free-will, and sermons; St. Cyprian, of Arles, who wrote the life of St. Cæsarius; St. Gregory, Bishop of Tours, who wrote the ecclesiastical history of the Franks, on the glory of the martyrs, on the glory of confessors, lives of the fathers, and many theological works; Marius, of Autun, who wrote a chronicle; Josephus, of Touraine, who wrote a history of the Jews; St. Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, who composed sacred and profane poems, and lives of the saints; St. Columban, Abbot of Luxeuil, who composed poems, homilies, letters, and theological tracts; Marculfus, who wrote a collection of formula or models of public acts; Fredegair, of Burgundy, who wrote a chronicle; Jonas, Abbot of St. Amand, who wrote the life of St. Columban; St. Ouen, Archbishop of Rouen, who wrote the life of St. Eloi; St. Boniface, Archbishop of Mayence, who wrote theological works, sermons, and letters; Alcuin, Abbot of St. Martin of Tours, who wrote commentaries upon the Scriptures, philosophical and literary works, poems and letters; Angelbert, Abbot of St. Riquier, who composed poems, and a history of his monastery; Leidrade, Archbishop of Lyons, who wrote theological works, and letters; Smaragdus, Abbot of St. Michael, who wrote treatises on morals, commentaries on the New Testament, and a great grammar; St. Benet, Abbot of Aniane, who wrote the code of monastic rules, and theological works; Theodulph, Bishop of Orleans, who wrote instructions on the schools, poems, and theological tracts; Adalhard, who wrote the Statutes of Corbie, letters, and a treatise, *De ordine Palatii*; Dungal, of Ireland, a recluse of St. Denis and a poet, who wrote upon eclipses; Halitgaire, who wrote a penitential, and a treatise on the life and duties of priests; Ansegisus, Abbot of Fontenelle, who collected the capitularies of Charlemagne and Louis-le-Debonnaire, in four books; Friedegres, Abbot of St. Martin of Tours, who wrote a philosophic treatise upon nothingness and darkness, and poems; Ermold the Black, Abbot of Aniane, who wrote a poem on the life and deeds of Louis-le-Debonnaire; Amalaire, of Metz, who wrote a rule for canons, and a treatise on ecclesiastical offices; Eginhard, who wrote the life of Charlemagne,

annals, and letters; Agobard, Archbishop of Lyons, who wrote poems and theological treatises; Hilduin, Abbot of St. Denis, who wrote upon the patron of that abbey; Doane, Duchess of Septimania, who wrote a manual of counsels to her son; Jonas, Bishop of Orleans, who wrote a treatise on the institution of Laics, and on the institution of a king; St. Ardon Smaragdus, who wrote the life of St. Benet; Theganus, of Treves, who wrote the life of Louis-le-Debonnaire; Walfried Strabo, Abbot of Reichenau, who wrote a commentary on the whole Bible, the life of St. Gall, poems, one of which was descriptive, entitled *Hortulus*, and several theological treatises; Freulfus, Bishop of Lisieux, who wrote a history of the world; Angelome, monk of Luxeuil, who wrote commentaries on the Bible; Raban-Maur, Archbishop of Mayence, who wrote fifty-one works of theology, philosophy, philology, chronology, and letters; Nithard, Duke of Maritime France, and monk of St. Riquier, who wrote the history of the dissensions of the sons of Louis-le-Debonnaire; Florus, of Lyons, who wrote theological treatises on grace, poems, and a complaint on the dismemberment of the empire after Louis-le-Debonnaire; St. Prudentius, Bishop of Troyes, who wrote on grace; Loup, Abbot of Ferriers, who wrote on the same, and also a history of the emperors; Paschasius Radbert, Abbot of Corbie, who wrote upon the Eucharist, and composed the lives of Wala and Adalhard; Ratramnus, who wrote on the Eucharist and on grace; Gottschalk, who wrote on grace; Otfried, monk at Weisembourg, who wrote a paraphrase on the Gospels in verse; Milon, monk at St. Amand, who wrote poems, one upon sobriety, and a pastoral entitled, the *Combat of Winter and Spring*; John Scot Erigenus, who wrote upon philosophy and upon grace, and the division of nature; Usuard, monk of St. Germain-des-Pres, who wrote a martyrology; St. Remi, Archbishop of Lyons, who wrote upon grace and free-will; St. Adon, Archbishop of Vienne, who wrote upon religion, and a universal history; Isaac, Bishop of Langres, who made a collection of canons; Hery, who wrote the life of St. Germain of Auxerre, in verse; Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, who wrote theological treatises, and political works; the Monk of St. Gall, who wrote the life of Charlemagne; Remi, monk of St. Germain of Auxerre, who wrote a commentary on the Bible, and commentaries on the ancient grammarians and orators; Abbon, monk of St. Germain-des-Pres, who composed a poem on the siege of Paris by the Normans in 885; Hucbald, monk of St. Amand, who wrote poems and lives of the saints; St. Odon, Abbot of Cluny, who wrote theological treatises, poems, and a life of St. Gregory of Tours; Frodoard, who wrote poems, and a history of the church of Rheims; Helperic, who wrote a treatise on the computation of time in relation to the ecclesiastical calendar; John, Abbot of St. Arnoul at Metz, who wrote lives of saints, and the history of John of Verdière, Abbot of Gorze, in which he relates his embassy into Spain to Abderam, Caliph of Cordova; Adson, Abbot of Montier-en-Der, who wrote the treatise on Anti-Christ, which was so celebrated; Arnoul, Bishop of Orleans, who wrote *De Cartilagine*, being an essay on anatomical studies; Gerbert, Pope Sylvester II., who wrote works on mathematics and philosophy, on theology, poems, and epistles, which showed that the activity of men of learning was not abated by the pre-

vailing opinion that the world was then about to perish, as the tenth century drew to its close.

Literature has been said to be the expression of society: that of the ages of faith was thus holy and historical. Has it, on moral and philosophical grounds, any reason to fear a comparison with our own? Men may have wanted the critical sagacity that could always detect imposture, and disengage the real facts of a narrative from what credulity and exaggeration had superinduced; but insincerity can never be laid to their charge. They wrote, in regard to truth, like Fluery, of whom Chateaubriand says he would rather die than be guilty of a falsehood. What Montaigne says of himself, applies perhaps to every author,—that he does not more make his book than his book makes him: and on this principle, an acquaintance with the books of the middle ages would lead us to conclude, that those who wrote them were among the holiest and the wisest men that ever lived in the tide of times. Besides these original works, the collections which were made during the middle ages, and the choice of authors, which we find invariably to have been formed with the soundest judgment, and in which the men of greatest science in our days have nothing to change, prove them to have possessed judicious and solid, as well as extensive learning. Such were those vast compilations of which the *Margarita Philosophica*, by an anonymous author, and the *Speculum Naturale* and *Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais, are examples, forming an abridgment of all the branches of human knowledge. The compilation of moral and theological sentences, like those of the Abbot Eugippius and Louis of Blois, indicate prodigious research, and a true perception of literary beauty. That spiritual and affecting book, which was published at one time as the manual of St. Augustin, and at another as that of St. Anselm, or of Hugues de Saint-Victor, was, in fact, composed by some writer of the middle ages, whose name is unknown. The same is true respecting the book entitled the *Soliloquies* of St. Augustin, which was written subsequent to the year 1198, as is inferred from the author having inserted in it sentences from the first chapter of the fourth Council of Lateran, held in that year. We have seen in a former place that the ascetical writers of the middle age wrote only to edify the faithful, and had no ambition to win the glory of writing well. “The rumour prevalent here,” says Louis of Blois, “that the number of the heretics is daily increasing, has compelled me to treat on these matters more at length. Henceforth I have determined on writing and publishing nothing, since I have to prepare myself for a salutary death: the world is already full of books.”\* Concealing their names as well as their lives, they made no scruple of availing themselves of what others had said before them, when they judged that it was better than what they could themselves say, seeking in every thing only the greater glory of God. The author of the *Manual*, indeed, in his Preface declares, that it is only a collection of remarkable sentences from the holy Fathers.

Even on scientific subjects, men made a right choice of ancient authors, and had the no small merit of being able to distinguish what writers possessed the greatest merit. In the middle ages, Dioscorides and

---

\* Ludovic Blosius, *Epist. ad Florentium*.



Pliny were the only authors consulted for botany and the composition of medicines, and Galen was the great authority and guide of physicians, insomuch that Carden advises his pupil, when asked any irrelevant question by a patient, to reply, that Galen forbids him to answer that question,—as if the weight of his name was quite sufficient to put any one to silence. Now Baron Cuvier says, that Galen is the only natural philosopher of antiquity who deserves to be placed at the side of Aristotle. In ages of faith it was not overlooked, that the anatomical and physiological writings of this great man are composed in a spirit of profound piety, that he begins by invoking the Creator, and never loses an occasion of leading his reader to consider the final Cause in the wonderful construction of the human frame. What penetration did men evince in revering Plato for having taught that the soul was an emanation from the divinity! How little reason have the moderns to ridicule them for so admiring Aristotle, that they would always lift their cap when he was named! Baron Cuvier declares, that he never reads the Natural History of that philosopher without being filled with astonishment at his genius and observation. The first complete Latin translation of Aristotle was given in the thirteenth century by Michael Scot, who had studied in Spain with the Arabs. It is not to be denied, however, but that of the phantastic learning there were unhappily some examples, in the very ages when it was most clearly denounced, and therefore, when it ought to have been regarded with the greatest aversion. Who has not read somewhat of those strange retired old men, who thought that in Nature's infinite book of secrecy a little they could read,—who, in subterranean vaults, worked incessantly at what was called the great work, those blowers and alchemists,—among whom poor Nicholas Flamel was unjustly reckoned by posterity,—and who, notwithstanding all their follies, used to be supported by the alms of some devout though weak persons? or of those mysterious inhabitants of the cloister, like that clerk of fame who had studied in Padua, far beyond the sea, regarded on his return with such dubious reverence,—

“As when in studious mood he paced  
St. Andrew's cloistered hall?”

Gillebert, Abbot of St. Bertin's at St. Omer, was accused, by a proud disobedient prior whom he had deposed, of being an alchemist. John of Ypres, who wrote the chronicle of that Abbey, says, that he has been present when the Abbot Alelmus proved the metal, of which certain candlebrases and vases were composed that had been made and given by Abbot Gillebert, and that they were found to be of alchemic silver. Gillebert used to be called the golden Abbot, from the splendour of his works. “And since I have alluded to alchemy,” says John of Ypres, “I entreat all and each one never to apply their mind to this art. For this art promises beautiful things, and gives few: it strongly attracts and fascinates men, and many are deceived by it. Trust one who has experience,—for I who write this was deceived by it, and I have seen many similarly deceived. Nor have I ever seen any one who has attained to the true work, which is of itself probable, for the principles of this art do not agree with the principles of nature. Also, its end is plainly defective, nor does a metal become good by it: witness Albert, in his book

entitled *Semita Recta*, which he composed on this art, in which he says, ‘By this mode gold is made better than all that which is extracted from the mines of the earth, in weight and colour, and fusibility, ductability, and malleability; excepting that, as alchemic iron is not attracted by the loadstone, so alchemic gold does not cure the leprosy, nor by means of it is the heart of man made glad, and the wound which it makes swells, because it is not the gold of God.’ These are the words of Albert.”\* Christine de Pisan mentions, that “the wise King Charles, who singularly delighted in all men of science, heard that, towards Avignon, there was a speculative clerk who led a life of philosophy, and worked with great subtilty in the art of alchemy, in which it was said he had already attained to many fine and notable points. The said clerk had been a disciple of Master Arnault de Villeneuve, who was a very solemn man in science, and who, it was said by some, had attained to the philosopher’s stone. The king, who desired to see all subtil things, wrote to him that he wished him to come to him, and that he would reward him well. The clerk, in his letters, written in very fine Latin, thanked the king humbly for the honour which he paid to him unworthy; but in sooth, as he was a solitary man, speculative, and of strange manners, he was not fit to appear at court: he had no flattering accents on his tongue; he was too much at ease in repose, in leading a poor life, eating roots and leaves, and speculating in philosophy: as he was not covetous of other’s riches, there was no delight or wealth which could induce him to lose the repose and pleasure of speculation. The king sent him a message to say, that he did not wish to deprive him of his repose, but to increase it if he could; and that, although God had given to him the charge of the office of temporal rule, his inclination and his desires were not bent upon hearing lying flatteries which are thus offered to princes, but to search into the points of truth and virtue. The clerk, seeing the benignity of the king, came to Paris, where the king received him with great honours, and heard him speak. He remained a short time, and then returned with many fine gifts.”†

Modern science is indebted for the knowledge of many important facts to these indefatigable and mysterious inquirers of the middle age. Though employed in occult, and therefore in sinful occupations, they were not without some influence, from the devout spirit of their times. “The chemical philosopher,” says Sir Humphrey Davy, “should resemble the modern geometricians in the greatness of his views and the profoundness of his researches, and the ancient alchemists in industry and piety, in keeping his mind awake to devotional feelings, that in becoming wiser he may become better.” If I did not fear to tire and offend the reader, I could relate some strange discoveries or professed inventions connected with these forbidden studies. Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, Petrus Loyerus, Renodeus, Gregorius Tholosanus, Cardan, Capocchio, and many others, who thought that men might ape creative nature by a subtil art, recall sad examples of misdirected study. But it sufficeth to name them: we shall have occasion in a future place to speak of the superstitions of those ages, when there will be more excuse for

\* *Chronicon S. Bertini*, cap. 49, pars x. apud. Marten. *Thesaur. Anecd.* tom. iii.

† *Livre des Fais*, &c. iii. c. 22.

citing Arbatell. For the present, let us follow the example of the Lady of Branksome, and send back the book to Michael's grave.

It must be admitted that the sciences formed not the most favourite branch of study during the middle ages. As with the Spartans of old, the teacher who won most admiration, was not one who lectured upon the stars and the movements of the heavens, upon geometry, or the science of numbers, upon the power of letters and syllables, rythms and harmony of accent,—but it was one fond of antiquity like Virgil, who spoke of the generation of heroes and men, of the founding of colonies, and of the first establishment of cities, and in general, as Plato adds, *πάσης τῆς ἀρχαιολογίας*.<sup>\*</sup> Religion gave to history and to moral philosophy a charm and an importance which the natural sciences could never possess; and that is one reason why Catholic studies are generally so much more occupied with the former than with the latter, while those who pursue their opposite, having comparatively no interest in Christian history, which they are incapable of understanding in consequence of their false position, and finding but little encouragement from the ancient philosophers of the Socratic or Pythagorean school, who, with the original traditions of mankind, are all against them, naturally direct their genius to the pursuit of the exact sciences, in which they find nothing contrary to the state of mind in which it is convenient for them to continue. The mind of man, as Aristotle says, is naturally formed to embrace truth;† so that when that which is more immediately divine, as theological, is denied or rendered unattainable, it endeavours to supply the deficiency by scientific truth, by research into the causes and nature of material things. The heretics and schismatics in early ages, were known to apply with diligence to the natural sciences, as was witnessed in the Nestorians, who first propagated the science of the Greeks among the Persians, and other oriental nations.

In later ages they have not been wanting in similar application to the study of the sciences; and in cultivating the Greek and Roman literature, their efforts have been unwearied. The Church, from the first ages, has been accustomed to see genius and learning in the ranks opposed to her. Even after Christianity had acquired a complete victory, among the Greeks at least, the heathen party was still distinguished by the most commanding talents: it could boast of men worthy of very high admiration, whether we regard the extent of their learning or the elegance of their compositions. With respect to the witnesses, whose profession would lead us to suppose that they now, as formerly, came forward to accuse the wisdom of the ages of faith, I would not involve all in one similar sentence. There are in that number many learned and humane men, who would shrink from such charges, and gladly suppose themselves Catholics without the supposed humiliation of a Palinode, many impudent, illiterate, light men, who come forward as in the days of Luther and the Puritans, to sustain them. But this I do say of all kinds of protestors,—I ascribe science and classical learning to them: I concede the discipline of many arts: I do not deny them elegance of language, the sentiments that belonged to noble birth, penetration of genius, and abundant eloquence. Finally, if they claim many other

<sup>\*</sup> Hippias Major.

† Arist. Metaphysic. lib. i. cap. 1



merits, I do not object;—but the learning of Christian antiquity, and the humility which casts down all high thoughts, and brings them into captivity to faith,—that race never cultivated. They cannot have the same encouragement to pursue Christian learning; for their labours must be intended to serve a party, or at the most, some one nation, whose theologico-political system they defend: whereas, the Catholic student had the infinite satisfaction of being able to consider himself one of an immense army spread over the entire earth, consisting of men who, without having ever seen each other, were all directing their respective abilities to serve, not any particular sect, or government, or nation, or rank of society, but the sacred cause of the universal Church. Moreover, learning in them would only serve to develop more strikingly the inconsistency of their system; for they could not but admire the writings of the men with whom it would make them acquainted; and how painful would it be to imitate the inconsistency of those who eulogize Thomas à Kempis, and Fenelon, and St. Bernard, and others, without withdrawing the charge against the Church to which they belonged! Unhappily, some of their number have been tempted to claim possession of such men with consistency, by means of altering or diminishing the truths which they deliver, publishing St. Frances de Sales' Introduction to a Devout Life, corrected, as they say, from the errors of the Popish edition,—as if he had been originally one of their authors,—and cutting off the fourth book, of the Imitation of Christ, not perceiving that without that last part the three former are, in a theological, and even philosophic sense, inexplicable. Famous in the annals of literary deceit was the crime of Hiobus, a Lutheran, who, in the year 1528, published an edition of the book of Paschasius, Abbot of Corby, on the Eucharist, not only omitting whole chapters, but also adding and foisting in words and sentences of his own, in order to make that holy writer appear to speak his sentiments; but his perfidy was exposed by Nicolas Mameranus, who published, in 1550, at Cologne, an edition of the real work.\* “They who contrive how to propagate heresy under another name,” says Vincent of Lerins, “choose generally the writings of some ancient man, more obscurely set forth, which, by the very obscurity of its doctrine, may seem to agree with their own, so that whatever they propound, it may appear as if they were neither the first nor the only persons who think so; whose wickedness I deem worthy of double hatred, both because they do not fear to give the heretical poison to others to drink, and also because they fan, with a profane hand, as it were, the quiet ashes of some holy man, defaming his memory, and perpetuating, by revived publicity, what ought to be buried in silence.”† In some instances, indeed, this conduct may have arisen merely from a weakness which attaches itself to human nature, such as led the Turks formerly to maintain that Orlando was a Turk, from his renown having passed into Colchus, where it is more known than that of Jason and the Argonauts.‡ But this mode of appropriating intellectual riches, is foreign from the inheritance of the meek, and can have no security; while, on the other hand, imperfect

---

\* Mabillon, *Præfat. in iv. Sæcul. Benedict.* pars ii.

† Vincent. *Lerinens. Com.* cap. 40.

‡ Huet, *de l'Origine des Romains*, 37.

or ambiguous sentences were not a sufficient ground for them to abandon their claims to great writers as having been in error, but, according to the advice of Facundus, they were warranted in interpreting, in a better sense, the writings of all learned men who were gone before in the peace of the Church.\* Even without literary fraud, the learning of these proud choosers was often employed in self-deception and in misleading others; for "he only reads with profit," says St. Hilary, "who expects the sense of the things said from the words, and does not impose it upon them,—who does not force that to seem to be contained in the words, which before reading he had presumed was to be understood."† In attempting to explain what was the doctrine of the Church, they worked at hazard, and without any judgment: respecting the Trinity, they would as soon have consulted the writers who had opposed Pelagius as they would have studied St. Athanasius, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Augustin, and St. Fulgentius, for the doctrine of grace, forgetting that, although the anti-Nicene or the Greek Fathers did not think different from the Catholic Church, still, not being obliged by circumstances to treat upon those questions, they only alluded to them in passing, and with less precision. In describing the doctrines and customs of Catholics, these modern historians wrote with as much knowledge as Tacitus evinced respecting those of the Jews, which he designates as sordid, detestable, and absurd.‡ They were betrayed into the most palpable inconsistencies, so as to speak in admiration of the solid piety of the founders of their ancient colleges in times of what they termed Popish superstition. Wondrous is the force of truth, cries Petrus Cellensis, which takes captive the adversaries unwilling and unaware, and drives them on to the snares of an unavoidable conclusion, when they are taken and entangled in their own words, speaking truth unintentionally, and expressing with their lips what they do not feel in their heart.§ Indeed, their endless concessions and panegyrics, in the same breath with the most unjust and horrible imputations, seem so like a total loss of intellectual conscience, that one ought to be less shocked at the old catalogue of epithets in use with the illiterate, or with the raving Burtons of old, than at these eulogiums. Meanwhile, the more noble adversaries of the Church, who scorn all dishonourable methods of appropriating intellectual glories, feeling such a sense of their poverty in respect to theological studies, are induced to substitute opinions and speculations for a study of tradition.

Truly, in their histories of the Church, it is curious to see how soon they find themselves painfully struggling amidst rocks and sands, and with what signs of pleasure they escape to the passes where a heathen's discourse would flow as smoothly as their own. These modern philosophic historians of the Church insensibly fall into a style as ridiculous as that of the pedant in Molière, who says, "You ought not to say I beg your advice, but I seem to beg it." With them there is never any thing, but, it would seem, as if all their confidence were reserved for repeating the detected falsifications of a Robertson.§ Even those who

\* Facundus Hermianensis, lib. ix. de tribus Capitulis 5.

† S. Hilar. lib. i. de Trinitate.

‡ Hist. lib. v.

§ Epist. lib. vi. 23.

§ Library of Useful Knowledge, Hist. of the Church.

have a tone of sincerity, dwell only on the reasons for doubt, and conceal all the proof of truth, and thus reconcile themselves to clear and certain falsehood. Lord Bacon himself remarked, that "when a doubt is once received, men labour rather how to keep it a doubt still than how to solve it, and accordingly bend their wits. But that use of wit and knowledge is to be allowed which laboureth to make doubtful things certain, and not those which labour to make certain things doubtful."\* To combat these wilful doubters is the task prescribed to Bellerophon, to destroy *Χίμαιραν ἀμαρτανόεντα*.† There is more of unfolding the sails of an oration with them than of labouring at the oars of dialectics. Even the sententious Tacitus becomes loquacious when an occasion offers of calumniating the Christians. They will always have the last word, and charity need not render the meek anxious to deprive them of this melancholy privilege. It belongs to the nature of man's reasoning faculty, that he should be able to protract disputation without end, and this ability is unopposed when there are no fixed principles, or when those which have been produced as fixed, may be changed and dissolved in a moment, as the success of those who produced them may require. In general, the learning of the adversaries only furnishes them with negations. Do they seem at length to take up a position? On your advance, they involve it in a mist of unintelligible phraseology, and you will hear them singing the pæon of victory. Methinks, like the old symbolical knight, who encounters the magical adversaries, the Catholic should only make the sign of the cross and pass on. Nor is it even necessary to have learning to remain unmoved at their bold propositions. They may appear to have an exact knowledge of an infinite number of minute facts, so as to know the shepherd better than if they were of the fold, for men in ignorance always affect to be very particular, like the traveller in Plautus, who, while pretending to come from Asia, where he had never been, replies to one who asked him whether Arabia is in Pontus,—

"Est: non illæc, ubi thus gignitur,  
Sed ubi absinthium fit, atque cunila Gallinææ."‡

These graphic triflers light upon a false date, or a hasty and ambiguous word, and instantly rejoice like a hungry lion, who stumbles upon some great carcase of a stag or goat, and he will fasten upon it although the swift dogs and keen hunters are close to him: and so does the sectarian critic rejoice when he sees with his eyes something that will satisfy his appetite for censure and for doubt. This discovery, he thinks, will justify the schism of his ancestors; this inference will prove that the Church has fallen. "Quis illas conclusiunculas non rideat, quibus literati homines se simul et alios fatigant?" As Tertullian says of the demon in pagan times, who employed against Christians both truth and falsehood, "Omnia adversus veritatem de ipsa veritate constructa sunt."§ These polemic and historical compositions resemble those which Glaucus describes, being formed of sentences exactly balanced and symmetrical, in harmony with each other, and having the same tone, according to the art of the sophists in accumulating genitive and other accordant sounds.§

\* Advancement of Learning.  
‡ Apolog.

† Hom. Il. vi. 179.  
§ Plato de Repub. vi.

‡ Trinum. iv. 2.



Plausible books men may compose from ancient writings, by committing faults against the letter and sense of the text, by the addition, suppression, and change of words, by the change of punctuation, by suppressions of phrases in the text, such as conceal what is necessary for understanding the author, which leave only a part known, suppressions of explanations, limitations, and essential exceptions, by extracts which make an author say what he never said, but the contrary to what he said, by extracts which unite what ought to be separate, and which separate what ought to be united, by unfaithful statements, essential omissions in the recital of facts, by assertions which are false, or hazarded without proof, by acts given falsely as authentic, by extracts which have no relation to the title, by translations in violation of grammar, by alterations of sense in words, by addition, omission, transposition, and change, by treacherous expressions, contradictory to sense, redundant, deficient, inapplicable, malignant. By these and other kinds of falsification they may maintain the system of the moderns, and so still repeating their spiteful song, condemn and vilify Catholic writers, but as Louis of Blois observes, in his mild and penetrating style, “though they may say a great deal, and persuade many with specious words and vain eloquence, yet those who are truly humble, that is, who are humble in heart, they cannot seduce.”\* Meanwhile, there is nothing in the success of such labours to be compared to the pure and tranquil recompense of the meek; there is nothing to conciliate esteem for the writer, even from the gentler spirits of his own party; he may have evinced sagacity, quickness, and diligence, but the muse of every clime rejects him; he is not an enemy, like Pandarus, to whom Apollo himself gave his bow.† Those on his side may feel often tempted to entreat him, in the words which Bacchus addresses to the frogs, of whose monotonous chorus he is weary,

“ἀλλ’, ὦ φιλῶδὲν γένος, παύσασθε.”‡

Confined and fettered at every step in the career of letters, he is deprived of the enjoyment of books that are most venerable and admirable, and compelled to resign to the meek the rich inheritance of the ancient Christian literature. At the same time, he may not be ignorant of any event in ecclesiastical history, for the most insensible and destitute may have read every thing. King Assuerius, having ordered Mardochæus to be fixed to the cross, and being unable to sleep that night, ordered that histories and the annals of former times should be read to him.|| What history or book of annals have not the modern adversaries of the Catholic church read, while crucifying the Son of God afresh? Let it be remarked too, that an acquaintance with the literary productions of the adversaries is unquestionably far from being essential to a learned Catholic, but that the converse does not hold with regard to their interest in Catholic literature. “Mihi quidem,” I might reasonably say, in the words of Cicero, “nulli satis eruditi videntur, quibus nostra ignota sunt;”§ or, as he remarks of Plato and other Socratic philosophers, that they are read by all persons, even by those who do not assent to

\* Epist. ad Florentium.

|| Liv. Esther. cap. vi.

† Il. ii. 27.

§ De finibus, i.

‡ Aristoph. Ran. 240.

them, whereas no one ever takes in his hands Epicurus and Metrodorus, unless it be one of their immediate disciples;\* we also may appeal to the fact that all persons read the Catholic philosophers, while no one ever hears of Taylor or Jewell, unless it be within the immediate circle of their sect. I omit to speak of the ignoble crew, whose learning consists in the ridicule of holy things, in holding them up to the eyes of flesh, and concealing their relation to faith and to a supernatural existence. Ah, that noble spirits should be joined to such a rout! Where license of that description is permitted, there is nothing so easy as to write books that will seem to indicate imagination, sagacity, and genius; and the temptation is too strong for modern authors, to whom therefore the chronicles of the ages of faith are a mine of inestimable value, which they are incessantly working, with a diligence commensurate with their vanity or their avarice. To refrain from examining such productions is no real diminution of the inheritance of the meek, and certainly they should refrain. "It seems to me," says St. Augustin, "that studious and ingenuous youths, fearing God and seeking the happy life, should never dare to approach and follow confidently any doctrines which are exercised without the church of Christ, but should learn to judge them soberly and diligently, and that they should reject utterly and detest some things through suspicion of those who are in error, and that they should keep their studies separate, at a distance from the superfluous and luxurious institutions of men."† Who is ignorant that a new and most dangerous crew of writers has arisen in those professed historians and antiquarians of the French school, who have succeeded to the Ducanges, Mabillons, and Martenes, men who are Catholics in name and heretics in spirit, solemn libertines, followers of Epicurus, who with the body make the spirit die, of whose writings there is not a page that would not have served to Plato as a specimen of the sophist's style, so far poetical that it would entitle them to use the language which Hesiod ascribes to the muses.

"ἵδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοία."

though not perhaps to complete the sentence,

"ἵδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐβέλουμεν, ἀληθέα μυθήσασθαι."‡

The superficial and frivolous nature of these compositions is illustrative of the justice of Aristotle's sentence, that "it is the breast which makes men learned;" but the effects which are produced continually by their diffusion, might make men sigh for the comparative security from imposition which readers formerly possessed, when even the wisest and most learned men, like Mabillon, would not have presumed to publish any writing without the consent of superiors, and when other means were placed at every one's disposal of knowing the real value of particular works, besides what might be inferred from the authority of a company of traders, whose sole estimation of the excellence of a book depended on the supply of money which it would bring them. Books formerly, as well as persons, were canonized, that is, were admitted into the class of approved and authentic works. This usage of the word seems more ancient with the Greeks, for we find in St. Athana-

\* Tuscul. lib. ii. 3.

† De Doctrina Christiana, lib. ii. 39.

‡ Theogon.

sus and others, the expression τὰ κατανέμειν βιβλία. In the year 1308, the pope replied to the Friar Minors who desired a change in their rule, "that the rule of St. Francis is canonized, and that he did not wish to violate it." Infamous books were burned by the Apostles. It would be strange if they who were not to receive into their houses any one who brought not apostolic doctrine,\* were allowed by the same law to accept their serpent books. St. Isidore says, "that to read impious books is the same thing as to offer incense to the demon; and theologians demonstrate from history that the holy Church in every age has exercised jurisdiction in prohibiting their perusal."† Hence the books of the Arians, Manichæans, Priscillians, Pelagians, and Albigenses are no longer to be found, because they did not contain those doubtful things which men were to prove by inquiry. The liberty of St. Jerome was compatible with his own maxim, "that it was better to be ignorant of some things than to learn with danger;"‡ and where the error and danger were self-evident, Muratori says that it was due to the republic to pronounce sentence against books intrepidly, without further hearing.§ But to return to the learning of the avowed and less dangerous adversaries of the Church.

Having substituted speculation for the knowledge of facts, there is no longer occasion for the erudition which would be employed in explaining the latter. They are sufficiently skilful to be able to invent explanations for most difficulties, that would be only rendered more embarrassing by a greater portion of learning. When the Catholics appeal to history and to tradition for the truth of faith, the objector may feel for a moment at a loss, but he soon recovers himself, without the aid of learning, and replies in words, like those of the sophist of old to Socrates, "It is not difficult to find the solution of what you demand. I know very well, that if I were to be alone for a short time, and to look into myself, I could explain this to you, I could speak on this point to you clearer than all clearness." "I am convinced, indeed," replies Socrates, "that you will find this easily when you are alone." "It is just so: not at this present moment, but as I have said, when I shall have considered the point, I know well that I shall find the proper answer."§ A question, however, more important would be, will it seem satisfactory to him when on death-bed laid? for that is the moment which gives a value to all learning and to all pains. Will it be found a judicious reply when called upon to answer, not in a school of men, but before God's tribunal, before him who gave so clear a command, and who vouchsafed so infallible a guide to truth? At present, who does not mark that even worldly interests enter to increase his difficulties, and Demosthenes says, "In deliberations when money is added to either side, as if placed in one scale of a balance, it sinks that down, and drags reason along with it; and he who does this is then incapable of reasoning soundly and justly upon any question."\*\* Hereafter we must all, for one great day at least, become good logicians.

\* II. John 10.

† Ligorio Theolog. append. iii. de prohibitione libror. Joan. Devoti Instit. Canon. lib. iv. 7.

‡ S. Hier. Reg. Monach.

§ Plato, Hippias Major.

VOL. II.—12

|| De Ingen. Moder. lib. ii. c. 5.

\*\* Orat. pro pace.



But we have wandered too far upon the domains of this modern literature, and mine art with warning bridle checks me. We have been drawn on to behold the nakedness of that desolated region, and we may well weep on leaving it. Yet, not in order wantonly to offend and afflict those among whom is many a spirit allied to innocence and joy, did we pass beyond the stretch of promise; for some of these whom we have now, perhaps, with weak words grieved, are gentle and humane writers, whose instinctive reverence, and I know not what kind of poetic affection, for all that pertains to the holy Catholic church, which they view from a distance only, should render them, even without reference to diviner motives, the objects of our tenderest sympathy, and sincerest love; but if honour be due to their genius, and affection to their noble capacities, truth and sincerity are no less a sacred debt which we should render to them, heedless of the loss and injury, and multiplied sorrow which may result too surely to ourselves.

Returning now to the learning of the middle ages, we may observe that, in every sense of the term, this was Catholic, for it comprised all branches of human knowledge, although the divisions were few. The first mention of the division of the seven liberal arts into the trivium and the quadrivium, the three of grammar and the four of physics, the knowledge of which formed the qualification for the degree of master of arts, occurs in the work of Martianus Capella, an African, who lived before the time of Justinian. The monastic studies embraced the study of the holy Scriptures, of the holy Fathers, that of the councils, of the canon and civil law, of positive and scholastic theology, and moral theology, that of sacred and profane history, that of philosophy, that of what is termed humanities, including the study of manuscripts, inscriptions, and coins. Notwithstanding the predominance of theological and moral studies, we must not suppose that in every other men were mere children, and incapable of distinguishing popular errors, as some would conclude, from the city of Lucerne having mistaken some huge fossil bones for those of a giant, which it caused to be borne on its shield as such. The Carmelite friar Nicholas, who describes his pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the year 1486, was shown, when at Jaffa, one of the ribs of the giant Andromadus, which measured forty feet in length; "but I am of opinion," he adds, "that it is the rib of a whale."\* The map of the world, by Father Mauro of Camaldoli, in the convent of St. Michael in Murano, drawn in the year 1460, had anticipated, or at least predicted, the discoveries of the moderns in the old world. Assuredly, even in a scientific point of view, the learning of the middle ages is most remarkable. The great doctors of the school appear also in the capacity of naturalists. We observe in the writings of Albert the Great, all the subtilty of the Arabic philosophers. In his books on physics, he gives all the hypotheses that are still produced to account for the formation of the stones which fall from the sky: he has a work, which Cuvier esteemed interesting, in twenty-six books, on animals, written in the scholastic style, first considering them in general, then descending to particular species, and describing their anatomical and physiological and historical character. In this he enlarges on Aristotle's work, and gives many new

---

\* F. xiii.

descriptions. His catalogue of animals is taken from Aristotle, Pliny, the Arabic authors, and his own observation. By means of the commerce of furs, he had seen many northern animals. Here occurs the first notice of the fish of the north seas, whales and herrings; he describes the shoals of herrings, so that it is an error to suppose that these shoals first began in the fourteenth century, for in the thirteenth he describes them. He speaks of birds also, and of falconry. Besides this great work he composed a number of little treatises on anatomy and medicine, chiefly extracted from Aristotle. He has one in five books, on minerals, in which are many things relative to alchemy. St. Thomas Aquinas, the principal disciple of Albert, having studied with him at Padua, and in the same Dominican convent, appears also in the capacity of a naturalist. He wrote a commentary on the physics of Aristotle, in which alchemy plays a great part. He speaks of mercury as that which gave metallic qualities to metal, just as sulphur was considered the principle of combustibility in bodies. In philosophy he had an antagonist in Dun Scotus, a Franciscan, who was a realist. Each order continued to maintain the favourite theory of their great respective doctors. Vincent de Beauvais, the Dominican, wrote *Speculum Magis*, or great mirror, in four parts, the first was *Speculum Naturale*, the second *Speculum Doctrinale*, the third *Speculum Morale*, and the fourth *Speculum Historiale*, in which last are found many curious facts of considerable importance in the study of history. The whole is a vast collection in four enormous folios, that would form twelve such folios as the men of our days make, composed of extracts from all sources, and containing many translations from the Greek. The first part is a universal treatise on natural philosophy, in the order of the six days of the creation, like the hexameron of St. Ambrose. It treats on animals, quadrupeds, birds, fishes, insects, on geography, on agriculture, on mining, on alchemy, on precious stones, which were then in great request for churches, where, as we have already shown, are still preserved the most rare and valuable specimens. The details and the style of this great work are richer than in the work of Albert the Great: he treats also on dreams, on prophecy,—in short, it shows that he embraced all parts of visible nature, and that he viewed them with penetration and judgment. Roger Bacon was a Franciscan, a native of Somersetshire. From Oxford he removed to Paris, where he met Grossetête, with whom he returned to England. He was the first to teach experimental philosophy, in the pursuit of which, by means of the liberality of his pupils and others, he expended two thousand pounds. His books, however, contained expressions that gave offence, and he was persecuted by the general of his order, but Pope Clement IV., hearing of his merit, ordered him to be delivered, and desired to see his books. On the death of this pope, the general renewed his attacks, but being raised to the popedom, he finally restored Bacon to full liberty, and bestowed on him the title of Doctor Mirabilis. Bacon, in his writings, treats on reading glasses, on the microscope, on the telescope, on concave and convex mirrors: he called for the reformation of the calendar, which was afterwards made by Pope Gregory, and he showed the proper method, which was afterwards pursued in effecting it. He understood the steam engine and steam vessels. His alchemy was learned from the Arabians, and he professed, like all the other

alchemists of the thirteenth century, the theory which has of late been supported by Stahl. He speaks also of gunpowder. It appears that in his time children used it commonly for their amusement, by means of different little instruments. It was employed in the mines of Germany as early as in the twelfth century. In the beginning of the thirteenth, in the third crusade, it was first employed for the purposes of war, against the castle of Theirs. Friar Bacon was one of the many religious men who, amidst the pursuit of science, retained all the spirit of his blessed order. Another example was seen in Father Alexander Spina, who was one of the first to develop the discovery of convex glasses to assist the sight. In the very ancient chronicle of St. Catharine of Pisa, he is called "a humble and good man, who used to write down whatever he saw or heard, and who was the first to make known the use of glasses for the eyes." In another chronicle of the same convent, it is said that he learned to make them without having any teacher. Some of the great mathematicians of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were friars. Such was Friar Lucas Pacioli of Borgo, a St. Sepolcro, of the order of the Minors, who had no rival in his age. It was he who was the author of the first book of algebra known to Europe. William Becchi, an Augustin and Bishop of Fiesole, and Friar Leonard, a Dominican, were illustrious in the fifteenth century, both in astronomy and mathematics. But in the science of these men we still trace the holy monk. If they cultivate the physical sciences, the master was to attend more to the utility than to the curiosity of the matter. "*Denique mente teneat id semper nobis præferendum esse quo prodesse possimus rurestri populo, cujus curæ et ministerio constitui solemus,*" say the statutes of the order of Præmonstré.\* If Roger Bacon studies astronomy, it is in order that the calendar may be well arranged, to determine the festivals of the Church; if he treat on the magnifying glass, it is to rejoice in the consolation and assistance which will result to the aged priests for reading the books of their holy office. In like manner the old author of the poem entitled the *Mirouer du Monde*, which is a mixture of cosmography and natural history, as also a history of the inventions of arts, says that Ptolomy the astronomer was of great service to monks, in furnishing them with the means of assembling together at the exact hour to repeat the office of matins. "Let not the study of natural philosophy," says Dionysius the Carthusian, "delight you more than that of theology: *quid enim prodest cognitio creaturarum sine dilectione ac debita veneratione Creatoris?*"† To the ancient philosophers such views would not have appeared unworthy or ridiculous. The advantage which Plato ascribes to the study of astronomy is that it induces the soul to look upwards to the Primal Being and to what is invisible.‡ No one conversant with his writings need be told of the care which he takes to show that learning or study should not be pursued for any object of commerce or traffic, but in order to strengthen the soul and to convert it from things that are born to that which has existence in itself; for this, with him, is the great object of all learning and all science.

Proceeding now to the sacred studies of the middle ages, there is

\* Statuta ord. Præmonstratensis, cap. 9. art. 4.

† De Repub. lib. vii.

‡ De Arcta Via Sal. i.



much that demands our attention; but I can only glance at their order. Positive theology consisted in the study of the holy Scriptures, of councils, and tradition, but scholastic theology embraced a wider field, and admitted the illustrations of philosophy and other learning. Tayan, a priest of Sarrazozza, was the first who composed a sum of theology: he lived in the middle of the seventh century. In the first book of this compilation, which has never been printed, he treats on God and his attributes; in the second on the incarnation, the evangelic preaching, the pastors of the Church and their flock; in the third on the various orders of the Church, on virtues and vices; in the fourth on the judgments of God, on temptations and sins; in the fifth on the reprobate, on the general judgment, and on the resurrection of the dead. St. John Damascenus was the first among the Greeks who published a sum of theology, which is entitled on the orthodox faith. St. Anselm was the first among the Latins who treated theological questions in a scholastic manner, and Mabillon admits that his writings, with the four books of Peter Lombard, can never be studied without deriving considerable advantage. A clear description and an admirable defence of the scholastic theology is given by Melchior Canus.\* It consists, he says, in reasoning learnedly concerning God and divine things, from the sacred writings and institutions. The proud subtilties, and contentious disputations, morose and tedious, of some doctors, are to be ascribed to the manners of evil men, not to the school, for it is a calumny to affirm that the majority were guilty of such childish trifling. The heretics, though they always affected to despise the school, rose up in arms against the scholastic theology. But they naturally regarded it with displeasure, because it restrained their license in disputation. It was the office of scholastics to illustrate and also to confirm, as far as possible, from human studies, the doctrine of the Church of Christ, to spoil the Egyptians, to take the weapon from the hand of the enemy, and to smite off with his own sword the head of the proud Goliath, having an example of learning in St. Paul, and of wisdom in Moses and Daniel.

A theologian, says an ancient writer, professes science from God, but whatever he meets with in reading or observing relative to jurisprudence and medicine, and especially such things as have an affinity with theology, he gladly learns. For it is with wisdom as with virtues, all are branches of one stalk, according to the concordant sentiments of all noble theologians.† “I confess,” says the blessed Dionysius the Carthusian, “that as far as I am able to discern after self-examination, I am not conscious of having undertaken these works through any vanity or for any vile end, for the sake of fame, or of temporal advantage; but I engaged in them in order that by occupying myself daily in the Scriptures, I might become able to live according to them, acquiring true humility, meekness and patience, which I greatly need. From my heart I return thanks to God that I entered religion so young, in about my twenty-first year, since which I have now during forty-six years applied myself to study. I have read St. Thomas, Albert, Alexander de Hales, Bonaventure, Peter of Tarentum, Ægidius, Richard de Media

---

\* De auctoritate Doctorum Scholasticorum.

† *Instructio Novitiorum*, cap. 22. auct. P. Joan. à Jesu Maria.

Villa, Durandus, St. Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory, Dionysius, Origen, Gregory Nazianzen, Cyrill, Basil, Chrysostom, Damascen, Bœtius, Anselm, Bernard, Bede, Hugo, Gerson, William of Paris, besides all the vulgar sums and chronicles, all the canon and civil law, many commentaries on both Testaments, and as many of the natural philosophers as I could obtain, Plato, Proclus, Aristotle, Avicen, Algasen, Anaxagoras, Averroes, Alexander, Aphorabius, Abubather, Evenpote, Theophrastus, Themistius, and others; and, although the Scripture is clearly and copiously expounded by great doctors, and holy fathers, yet as St. Jerome saith, in the house of the Lord every one should bring what he can.”\* The scholastic theology embraced the three ends of all true theology, the knowledge of God, the knowledge of celestial things, the prudence and the use of human things; and so far was it from retarding the study of the holy Scriptures, that it invited and excited men to prosecute that study.† But I shall have occasion to return to this learning in a future place, when it will be necessary to speak of the philosophy of the middle ages. At present, let us return to matters more immediately connected with literature, though we have not been wandering far from the subject; for we must remember that after all it was Dante, the scholastic theologian, who became the monarch of poets. And in fact the scholastic divines, in consequence of their sublime apprehensions of truth, frequently furnish lines that would be worthy of his highest song, of which circumstances poets were well aware. We find Tasso complaining to his friend Aldus, that he had not sent him the sum of theology of St. Thomas, and asking for the works of St. Gregory Nyssen; and, in a letter to Vincenzo Malpiglio, expressing his intention to commence the correction of his *Jerusalem Delivered*, in the spring, he says, “I want a treatise of Pope St. Gregory, on the Hierarchy of the Angels,‡ which I have not yet read, and a commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul, respecting the armour of light, for I hope to render my whole relation more solemn and venerable by means of allegory.”|| To speak with contempt of the style and language of the ancient Christian writers, who give us in such abundance, the sweet food of sweetly uttered knowledge, has been a favourite artifice of modern writers, who endeavoured to win the renown of a more liberal erudition; but persons of solid instruction may naturally feel the necessity for much caution in admitting the justice of their charges. It is not always so easy to determine respecting style. Origen maintained that a certain chapter was in the highest and most excellent style of Daniel, and Julian Africanus denied that it was worthy of him. Men complain that some historians of the middle ages should have written in the style of bards, such as the monk of St. Gall and Ermold the black, who wrote a work on chivalry, and a poem on Louis the Pious; but Aristotle says, that the style of the first prose writers of Greece was entirely poetical, as that of the noblest authors in all ages has been in a great degree. It is true the priest of the Teutonic order Nicholas Jeroschin in the fourteenth century, found no subject fitter for a poem than the

\* B. Dionysii Carthusiani de Arcta Via Salutis. Protest. ad Superiorem.

† Melchior Canus, c. 1, 2.

‡ Homil. lib. ii. 34.

|| Prosatori dal Sec. xvi. p. 468.

contents of the old chronicle of the order by Peter of Dusburg which he accordingly versified; but modern critics are compelled to admire the spirit in which that work is composed. "With what diligent circumspection," says Dusburg, "the ancients and holy fathers committed to writing the wonderful works of our Lord Jesus Christ which were wrought by them or by their ministers is known to all; for they attended to the words of Tobias, 'quod opera Dei revelare honorificum est,' whose footsteps I follow, lest like the useless servant who hid his Lord's talent, I should be cast into outward darkness; therefore, I have written the wars which have been carried on by the knights of the Teutonic order." Voigt remarks, that this passage, as also the very title of another work, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, indicates that constant regard to Providence, which gave such a unity to their historical narratives, which are nothing but a wonderful relation of the combat between the good and the evil principle. Dusburg traces all enmities and seditions to the malice of the ancient serpent, the enemy of the human race, who envies the growing prosperity of a Christian community, and incessantly labours to interrupt the peace of the church; so that his whole history is the combat between God and the enemy of light and truth.\* The natural flow of their narrative often indicates the simple means which had been employed in collecting it. In the life of St. Liudger by Altfrid, there is mention of an old blind man named Bernlef, who was greatly loved by the whole country because he was affable and knew how to sing the acts and contests of the ancient kings.† And Adam of Bremen, one of the old historians of Prussia, says, that the Danish king Sweno, had retained in memory all the deeds of the barbarians, as if he had them in writing, and that he used to relate them to him when he was compiling his annals. Wernbert, the celebrated abbot of St. Gall, the son of Adalbert, who had followed his lord to the war against the Huns, used to be forced when a little boy to sit and listen to the tales of his father, and it was the conversation of this Adalbert which afterwards supplied the monk of St. Gall with the materials for his history. These old humble chronicles of days gone by, need not have been so despised by the pretenders to classical propriety, who nevertheless committed an error in their title page, and wrote histories of their own times.‡

With respect to the great learned works of the monastic and other Catholic writers, it may be remarked, that one is never shocked by the breaking out of personal vanity adding weight to trifles, and of secret private spite, suggesting malignant observations, and that while they analyze ancient traditions, they do not employ imaginations to destroy former opinions, nor do they insult the reader with a tone of wanton defiance drawn from the pride of scholarship. They never wound the pious ear by a profane application of the most sacred words of Christ and his apostles to their own subject. That detestable abuse introduced by heretics, which has passed into an example with modern authors, whose hearts are little alive to the holy delicacy of the faith,

---

\* *Geschichte Preussens*, iii. 613. † Mabillon, *Acta S. Ord. Bened. Sæc. iv.* p. 1.

‡ *Historia est res gesta sed ab ætatis nostræ memoria remota.* Cicero ad Heren. lib. i. 8.



was absolutely condemned by the fathers of the Council of Trent. They never offer for literature personal contests like those fierce academic squabbles of an Annibal Caro and a Castelvetro, who, as Varro would say, "*volsellis non gladiis pugnant.*" They have not the air of being in love with their own works, as if they could not survive the loss of them, like Terence, who is said to have died of grief because some of his translations from Menander perished at sea, when he was returning from Greece; nor can one find in them any trace of that jealousy which Petrus Crinitus detects in Plato and Xenophon, who never make mention of each other in their writings, though both disciples of Socrates.\* Their style may have been unpolished, but it was not like that of a literature which seems made by machinery. It was living, and often endued with a force that astonishes, as when the fathers describe the last moments of Julian, and say, "he died in the disgrace of God and men." In all their writings they evince that modesty and reverence which appears so remarkably in Dionysius, who though an antiquarian, and writing a most learned work on the antiquities of history, yet refused to enrich his work with information which religion forbade him to disclose, saying, it is not proper that I should write down those things which it is not permitted every one to see or hear of from those who have seen them.† Not that the same motives could have existed with Christians, but still there were many things which they would never expose to the common gaze of inquisitive men through respect for religion and humanity, through regard to private friendship, to the rights of hospitality, and to the initiations of their course in the schools. On the other hand, as was before remarked, they insert as well as omit some things, on account of their writings being intended for the eye of friends alone, on whose particular genius or experience they may have depended for the needful application or correction. "Remember," says St. Avitus, in sending his poem of consolation to his sister, "that this little book is only to be trusted to the reading of those who are bound to us by the ties of relationship or of religious vow. Scarcely, though constrained by orders, do I commit it even into your hands; when or how should I wish it to pass into those of strangers?"‡ Another contrast which their writings present to those of later ages, consists in the absence of all anxiety to draw at every step political reflections from history. Mabillon cites the words of a learned author, who says, there is no more visible effect of that wicked glory with which men are enamoured, than the vanity which they derive from the knowledge of politics. This disposition of mind which betrays their secret admiration for grandeur of rank, is one of the greatest obstacles to true wisdom: it perverts the understanding, and makes the mind irrational. They wish to know princes before they know men; whereas they must first know men before they can understand princes.|| How injurious to their own intellectual character is the neglect of this maxim by those great modern writers with whom political opinions are the highest test of virtue, in whose eyes Plato is a bad citizen, and Demos-

\* De Honesta Disciplina, lib. i. c. 7.

† Antiq. Roman. lib. i. cap. 68.

‡ In Libellum de Consolatoria Castitatis Laude Præfat.

|| De Studiis Monasticis, p. ii. c. 8.

thenes a saint? In another respect also their idea of learning was well conceived; for it did not consist like that of many modern solitary writers, in knowing the titles of innumerable books and in quoting from them at random, without having ever heard their history or known what were the author's life and actions, his particular genius, his object in writing, and the circumstances of the time in which he wrote.\* This is the erudition of our young contributors to the libraries that are gradually to eradicate Catholicism and impart pure light to men, although to a scholar of the ancient learning, it is all but mere drawing-room display. "*Circulatoriæ vere jactationis est.*" Unquestionably the great critics of antiquity might have found matter to censure and ridicule in some of the monastic compositions; but it does not appear exactly reasonable in the moderns to affect their right of judgment, considering the little correspondence between the greater part of their own literature, and the models by which they would attempt to try them. The praise which Caxton bestows upon Chaucer might be extended to many authors of the middle ages; for in fact he only evinced a characteristic feature of their whole literature in "comprehending his matter in short, quick, and high sentences, eschewing perplexity; casting away the chaff of superfluity, and showing the picked grain of sentence, uttered by crafty and sugared eloquence, in writing no void words, but having all his matter full of high and quick sentence." But it will be asked, was not the language of these old writers barbarous and their Latinity execrable? Many distinctions are necessary before we ought to subscribe to such an opinion. On the rise of Christianity some innovations in language were unavoidable; much indifference to its refinement was natural, and almost of necessary consequence. The Pagan rhetoricians complained that the Christian religion was effecting a revolution in grammar, and introducing many alterations into the Latin tongue. St. Augustin, who studied Cicero and Virgil with such care, though he showed the insignificance of their objections, was anxious to preserve the purity of the Latin language; but Arnobius altogether disdained the scruples of the grammarians, and confessed that in fact Christianity ought to introduce changes into the language, since it had changed the sentiments and views of men. Yet assuredly many writers of the middle ages, like St. Leo the Great, and St. Bernard, attained to an admirable grace and harmony of style. There were still men who could write treatises which have been mistaken for the composition of St. Augustin, and beauty of style was not excluded by that impressive unction which belonged to the ascetical writers, whose sweet and honied sentences disarm the severity of high crested thoughts. Nicholas of Clairvaux imitated the style of St. Bernard, so that it was almost impossible to distinguish it. Schlegel even asserts that the Latin language was written with the same elegance in the eleventh century, as in the golden age of Augustus. The schoolmen, indeed, may have used new words in treating of new things, or rather of things new to the Latin tongue; but the Roman authors themselves had taken similar liberties. Cicero used the words *Appiitatem* and *Lentulitatem*. The mania for substituting classical Latinity in place of the terms consecrated by Christian usage characterized the

---

\* Mabillon de Studiis Monast. pars ii. c. 111. § 3.

learning of the period immediately previous to the pseudo reformation, when new versions were published of the Psalms, and even of some ascetical works, as the imitation of Christ. Some wished to change *Salvator* into *Servator*, because the former does not occur in the writings of the heathens. This was an old idea, and St. Augustin had made the just reply, "Let the grammarians bark what they will about *Salvator* not being a Latin word: to Christians it is sufficiently Latin, provided it express rightly the truth of that article which they believe. I admit that the words *Salvare* and *Salvator* were not Latin before the Saviour came, but when he came to the Latins he made them Latin."\* With respect to the Latin which was known in secular society, there is no reason to conclude that it was wholly void of classical grace. The judgments at which presided the Viscountess of Béziers, and which were collected under a famous title, are said to have been pronounced in very good Latin.

We have already seen on what grounds the holy fathers without hesitation made use of the heathen writings to explain or illustrate to the Gentiles the true religion, but we have not sufficiently shown what an influence this Catholic view of learning, which allowed men to claim as their own every intellectual good, continued to produce upon the literature of the ages of faith. When it was argued by some that the fathers had only quoted pagan authors in consequence of their living among pagans, but that in subsequent ages Christians had no occasion to consult them, the objection was refuted by showing that the faithful still lived among men who extolled reason, and that on that account an acquaintance with the writings of the pagans continued to be of the greatest importance.† The observation of Minucius Felix on this point was equally just in all times, when speaking of men who being aware of what they deserve, wish rather than believe that every thing will perish with their bodies, being hardened in their error by remarking the liberty which they enjoy in this life, and the incomparable patience of God, he adds, "and yet nevertheless, they cannot open the books of any distinguished man, they cannot even read the poets, without finding salutary warnings on this head; so profoundly graven is this thought in the heart of all men, that a day will come when the different disorders which at present reign will be repaired, and when Divine justice will reward every man according to his works."‡ St. Clemens of Alexandria recognized the fundamental principle of Christianity that the testimony of God is the basis of faith, in that passage of the *Timæus* of Plato, where he says, that there is one only way to understand truth fully, which is, by being instructed by God himself, or by those who are born of God.§ "O man, magnificently humble and exalted by humility," cries Petrarch, speaking of St. Augustin, "who adorned with the plumes of others, does not insult over them, but while guiding the vessel of the Christian religion amidst the rocks of heresy, conscious to himself without arrogance of his own greatness, commemorates the rudiments of his youth, and though so great a doctor of the church, yet does not blush to have been led by the man of Arpinum who was tend-

\* S. Augustini Serm. 299.  
† Cap. 35.

‡ Jamin, *Traité de la Lecture Chrétienne*.  
§ Stromat. vi.



ing to another end.”\* St. Jerome, indeed, alluding to the day of judgment, says, in a rhetorical style, “foolish Plato with his disciples,”† but he admits the principle on which the ancient learning was still studied, in citing some verses from the *Æneid*, adding, “these things we take from a Gentile poet, that he who does not keep the peace of Christ may learn peace at least from a heathen.”‡ It was only when alluding to some strange conceits of Abailard respecting the procession of the Holy Spirit, which he spoke of as being the soul of the world, that St. Bernard used that famous expression, that endeavouring to make Plato a Christian he proved himself a heathen,|| which will not justify our concluding that St. Bernard generally was insensible to the sublimity of Plato, or to the advantage of studying his writings; in fact, the passages adduced by Abailard from his works are the last that would give an idea of the excellence of his philosophy. Petavius says, in his book on the Trinity, that if we examine the more ancient heresies of which there is mention in Epiphanius, Philastrius, and others, we shall find that of almost all the doctrines which were contrary to the Catholic faith, but especially those concerning the Trinity, the foundation and author was Plato;§ but, perhaps, it would have been more correct to trace them to the men who abused Plato by endeavouring to prove that he had anticipated Christianity. Fleury, in his manners of the Christians, makes the distinction between Plato with the old academicians and the Platonists of the age of Julian, who had little in common with the disciple of Socrates but the name; and he observes that when Christianity arose there were some true philosophers who faithfully sought to discover truth and to practise virtue. In the ages of faith, before men had experience of an attempt to revive the heathen philosophy within the Church, we find them speaking with greater respect of the ancient sages, and inheriting with greater abundance and security the intellectual treasures of ancient times. “This we ought to do” says Raban Maur, and his authority is decisive as to the opinion of these ages, “when we read the Gentile poets, or when the books of secular wisdom come into our hands, if we find any thing useful in them we should convert it to our doctrine; but if there be any thing superfluous, concerning idols or love, or the care of temporal things, that we should pass over.”\*\* When Jerome Savonerola warned some learned men sitting in the Marcan academy at Florence, from the study of the ancient philosophers, saying, that Plato tended to inspire insolence of mind and Aristotle impiety, Petrus Crinitus relates that Picus of Mirandula smiled, and said in reply that his own studies convinced him that the Mosaic writings, and the Christian religion, in a great measure agreed with the ancient philosophy as contained in the works of Pythagoras, Mercurius, Zoroastre, and Solon.†† After the sixteenth century, the insane arrogance of pedants and the errors of heretics naturally inspired the faithful with greater timidity and induced them to abandon many associations which they had formerly cherished with innocence and

---

\* Epist. Famil. lib. ii. 69.

† Epist. v.

‡ Epist. xv.

|| Epist. cxc.

§ De Trinitate, cap. 6.

\*\* Rabani Mauri de Institutione Clericorum, lib. iii. cap. 18.

†† De Honesta Disciplina, lib. iii.

enjoyed with meekness. A tone of gloom and severity which belonged rather to the porch of the stoics than to the meek and joyous family of the Church, infused itself even into the privileged fold, insomuch that Villani the historian complains that the taste for graver studies which occupied his age made the productions of their most celebrated poets appear frivolous. Before that era faith was too firm to fear any concession which did not compromise its principles, and men never supposed it possible that truth could be confounded with exploded errors or endangered by recognizing the voice of primary traditions in the monuments of ancient learning. They enjoyed and honoured genius and every testimony to truth, so that if a poet, like that Athenian of old, had described them visiting the shades, he would have shown them like Sophocles approaching and kissing Æschylus and Plato, and giving them in their capacity of poets and sincere lovers of truth, the first place, and never questioning their right to it, but that same poet would represent the moderns like Euripides, who began to cry out and contend for it, appealing to the judgment of the vile majority of the rabble shades.\* With what noble affection does St. Jerome speak of the great Origen, extolling the beauty of his immortal genius, and the depth of his researches, and at the same time acknowledging, though in a style that might move one to tears, that there were so many points on which he had erred.† The learning of antiquity harmonizes far more with that of the middle ages than with our own. When a youth at present leaves the schools where he has been familiarized with the sentiments of Socrates and Cicero, and the older sages, and on entering the world finds himself in the midst of what is called society, he perceives an abrupt transition which fills him with astonishment. His studies of heathen literature had not prepared him for this insolent contempt for all that is holy, this audacious mockery of goodness, this undisguised egotism: he finds in literature itself, a total contrast to every thing in the writings of the sages of antiquity, high and mysterious, generous and inspiring, to all that refined intellectual beauty which had so often exalted his imagination to rapture in solitude, and shed such a grace and sweetness upon those evening walks with early friends to which he looks back with such affection: he finds himself now among impious, ignorant triflers, centaaurically vociferating, men whose philosopher is Voltaire, whose temple is the exchange or the tribune, whose festivals are a horse race or a review of the civic guard, whose reading is confined to journals, and whose highest boast is to be one of the majority. But to return to the learning of the middle ages. "All things," says John of Salisbury, "offer themselves for the use of the wise man, who finds matter for exercising virtue in whatever is said or done: *nam et otia ejus negotia sunt*:" he proceeds rightly in his own actions, and he philosophizes upon the vanities of other men.‡ His own work, a monument of the wisdom and learning of the eleventh century, is an example of this in its vast and curious erudition, and in the excellent judgment with which classical passages are quoted; for besides all the known classics it contains extracts from a multitude of other books. More

\* Aristoph. *Ranæ*, 788.

† Epist. xxxvi. et Catalog. Scriptor. Eccles.

‡ De Nugis Curialium, lib. ii. Prolog.

than one hundred and twenty ancient authors are there cited. Peter of Blois, Archdeacon of Bath, in the twelfth century, cites passages from Aristotle, Boethius, Cato, Cicero, Tacitus, Frontinus, Galen, Gellius, Hippocrates, Horace, Justin, Juvenal, Lucan, Macrobius, Martial, Ovid, Persius, Plato, Plautus, Curtius, Quintilian, Sallust, Seneca, Statius, Suetonius, Terence, Theophrastus, Livy, Valerius Maximus, Virgil, and Vegetius. He had become a priest only in his old age. Christine de Pisan had read Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, and all the Greek and Latin poets, though her chief study had been the writings of St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustin, St. Jerome, and St. Ambrose. In the ninth century, Paschasius Radbert, who wrote the life of St. Adalhard, Abbot of Corby, applies a passage from the republic of Plato to his own subject, and makes with exquisite taste many quotations from the classical authors.\* "Though the Gentile without Christ," says John of Salisbury, "had not laid hold of the fruit of beatitude, yet we see in them the shadows of virtues, as in the diligence of Themistocles, the gravity of Fronto, the continence of Socrates, the fidelity of Fabricius, the innocence of Numa, the modesty of Scipio, the patience of Ulysses, the abstemiousness of Cato, the piety of Titus."† He shows that even the ancient poets convey lessons of salutary wisdom. Homer, he observes, chooses that his hero Ulysses should never be without Minerva, who signified prudence. Therefore, he underwent all horrible things without perishing; for he entered the cave of the Cyclops and escaped from it; he beheld the oxen of the sun and abstained; he passed into the infernal regions, and ascended from them; he sailed by Scylla, and was not seized; he touched Charybdis and was not retained, he drank the cup of Circe, and was not transformed; he visited the Lothophagi, and was not confined; he came to the Sirens and passed on his way.‡

If I am not deceived, it will be interesting to a scholar to take, in this manner, an occasional glance at the great writers of classical antiquity, as if from the cloisters of the middle age. The monks and holy men who wrote books in those times, are very fond of applying the beautiful sentences of Cicero and Plato to their own subject; but then they contrive to give them a tone essentially Christian, so as to be homogeneous with their whole composition, and they effect this by connecting or completing them with sentences out of the holy Scriptures, so that the entire page is made to express the simple unadulterated faith of Christ. In this way the classical student learned to associate the brightest gems of the ancient learning with the wisdom of Christians. If their lustre did not confer additional beauty on the thoughts, the practice will at least show with what innocence and piety the classical learning was cultivated in these ages of faith. An instance of this kind occurs in the old Life of Lietbertus, Bishop of Cambray, where the author describes the last discourse of that holy man in language taken from the *Treatise de Senectute*, by Cicero, and from the *Apology of Plato*: but he does not allow his reader to depart without hearing still higher wisdom, for the concluding words are these—"Unde ne censeas lugendam mortem quam im-

\* Mabillon, *Acta S. Ordinis Bened. Sæcul. iv. p. i.*

† *De Nugis Cur. lib. iii. cap. 9.*

‡ *Id. vi. cap. 28.*



mortalitas consequitur: si enim credimus quod Jesus mortuus est et resurrexit, ita et Deus eos qui dormierunt per Jesum adducet cum eo.”\* In this respect, the influence of classical learning upon literature was widely different from that which it exercised in a subsequent age, when men lost sight of the Christian character in their admiration of the writings of antiquity. In many writers of the sixteenth century there are two characters—the Christian and the Philosopher. Led away by enthusiasm for classical learning, they sometimes wrote like heathens and at others like devout Christians. In the same chapter and page of Montaigne, this separation is perceptible. Let antiquity appear, and he revives all its errors; let Christianity show itself, and he falls upon his knees. Cardan is another writer of this kind, yet in heart so Catholic, that he refused the offer of great advantages rather than reside in a Protestant country. This accounts too for the contradictory opinions which have been held respecting them. Generally, through Heaven’s mercy, grace was given to these men, enabling them to die penitent and Catholically, like Cardan, Polydore Virgil, and Montaigne. But they were not examples of the evil in its greatest extent. By degrees the classical spirit predominated to such a degree as to form the very character of men, and to impart that uniform odour of Paganism which is so perceptible in the modern literature. During the ages of faith, men did not cultivate classical learning with an indifference to its errors. Julian said that the Christians might persist in teaching the books of Homer, Hesiod, Herodotus, Thucydides, and others, if they would persuade their disciples that there was nothing of impiety in these authors, and that they should imitate their worship,—an indulgence which was only regarded as the addition of insult to injustice. But no exercise of ingenuity was more agreeable to them than the art with which they made use of the beauties of classical learning, without ever confounding its errors with the simplicity of Christian truth. Chateaubriand, in his *Martyrs*, has shown himself in this respect a true Christian poet; for though he employs Pagan Mythology, and all that is most severe and holy in the true religion, yet he never mixes them, or speaks of the former otherwise than as a Christian: yet his work was harshly criticised, on the ground of its combining irreconcilable elements, because his contemporaries were ignorant of a legitimate use of heathen erudition. Had that work appeared in the middle ages, it would have been received with enthusiasm, because men were then accustomed to use heathen and Christian learning without confounding either. In fact, to the inheritance of the earth was attached much that was gracious and innocent in the manners as well as in the learning of the ancients. Christianity sanctioned no superstitious separations or distinction. The names of adults were not even changed in baptism, so that many saints retained the titles which came from false gods, as Denis, Martin, Demetrius; and on the sepulchres of the martyrs may be seen traced the ancient symbol of the heart. A holy Franciscan, Father John of Bordeaux, in his book entitled the *Christian Epictetus*, speaks of weak persons who, not comprehending how grace corrects the faults of nature, blame the alliance which he seems to make in that book between the maxims of a philoso-

---

\* Vita Leitberti, Episcop. Cameracens. cap. 63, apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. ix.

pher and those of the Son of God. Knowing that heaven is not farther removed from the earth than human philosophy from evangelical wisdom, they cannot persuade themselves that there may be a union between these two sciences. "They are deceived," continues the wise friar. "That is not impossible: for holy souls in Christianity have an admirable secret to unite them, which is the miracle of charity." The Church, in her solemn offices, reads from the works of one whom she names not in consequence of his fall. The books of Wisdom are for her use, and she reads from them; but she is not authorized to claim their author, and therefore she declines pronouncing his name.\* "All things are to be read," says John of Salisbury, "in order that some, when read, may be neglected, some reprobated, some seen in transitu, and others to be more studied, as those which relate to political life, or to jurisprudence, or to ethics, or which conduce to the health of the body or soul. Nothing," he continues, "should arrest the mind which does not tend to make man better. Even those things of which the use is necessary, if pursued immoderately, become most pernicious. Who doubts that poets, historians, orators, and mathematicians should be read, since without them men are ignorant and illiterate; yet when they claim possession of the mind as of right, although they promise the knowledge of things, they withdraw men from virtue and from devotion. Witness the vanity of Cicero! What darkness covers minds that are lifted up like his by praise! What fear comes upon them, what cupidity inflames them! These palliate adulteries, teach injustice, and propose examples of evil to the multitude. What fires from heaven, or inundation from the sea, or opening of the earth, cause such destruction of people as these occasion of manners! For reading alone, without the co-operation of grace, can never make man wise.† But with grace assisting him, all things are food to him, because, in all creatures, the Lord speaks to him the words of his salvation. All edification of manners is from the Lord, and all instruction of safety is, in a certain manner, the Word of God; and from whatever part truth is offered, it should be accepted, because it is always incorrupt and incorruptible. Therefore all things may be read if vice be avoided. What is even the odour of death to some may be profitable to life in others: all are more or less useful; and hardly can any writing be found, from which, if not from the sense or words, there may not still be drawn something by a prudent reader. The Catholic books are read with more safety, but it is still very useful to be acquainted also with those of the Gentiles. Wisdom is as a certain fountain, from which all the rivers flow that water the whole earth, which not only form the garden of delights of the divine page, but also pass to the nations, and enrich those flowery regions with beauty and fragrance."‡ In this admirable passage the danger of such studies to some minds is admitted, to which we find allusion also in many other works; for the scholar of the middle ages sometimes found by experience, that the reading of the heathen poets was injurious to the purity of his soul. Such an instance is related in the chronicle of Centulensis, and the young man is said to

---

\* Durandi Rationalis, lib. vi. 1.

† Id. cap. 10.

‡ De Nugis Curialium, cap. 9.

have renounced secular learning ever afterwards, and to have devoted himself wholly to what was divine.\*

It remains only to notice briefly the character of learning, during these ages, in its application to secular objects.

In early times medicine was studied by monks. Those of Monte Cassino employed the time that remained to them after their devout prayers, in the relief of afflicted humanity. In the beginning of the twelfth century, Faricio, a monk of Arezzo, was illustrious in medicine. Passing into Scotland, he became abbot of the monastery of Aberdeen, and was held in great repute for his medical knowledge by the monarchs of that kingdom. We have already remarked the excellent judgment which was shown in the choice of Galen for the chief authority. Cardan says, that there had been in ancient times a distinction between herbalists and physicians,† It was chiefly in the former capacity that the monks practised. Their motive was wholly religious, and the influence of piety appeared in this as in all their other sciences. An example occurs in the chronicle of Sens, of which the author speaks as follows:—"When I was in Argentine following the schools, there was a certain Master Henry with St. Thomas who was imbued with the art of medicine. He being made prior at Trouthenhouze, related to me, that a certain soldier named Rambald being attacked with a grievous sickness, sent to invite the prior to come to prescribe for him. On his arrival he found the soldier dangerously ill; so the prior said to him, 'My lord, if you believe me, you will first confess your sins, and receive the body of Christ, before I attempt to cure you, because that will be a more important remedy for you.'"<sup>‡</sup> However, as the study of medicine was found to interfere with more important duties, a decree of the Council of Rheims, in the year 1131, prohibited monks and canons from pursuing it; and in that of Tours, in the year 1163, Pope Alexander III. declared, that those who left their cloister to learn the art of healing or to pursue the study of law, would incur excommunication.

Many of the most learned laymen, in the thirteenth century, were physicians. They studied with the Arabs, to which education may perhaps be ascribed the errors of Arnold de Villeneuve in matters of faith. He too had studied with the Moors in Spain, from whom he learned the art of making brandy, which they regarded as a medicine, being prevented by their law from using it for any other purpose, and which he was the first to introduce into Europe. His heretical tenets on points of faith caused his books to be burnt, and it was with difficulty that the Pope succeeded in saving those which had only relation to medical science. In the same age flourished Raymund Lulle, a man of noble race, senechal of the King of Arragon. He was a warrior, a poet, an alchemist, and a theologian: he passed into Africa to convert the Mahometans, and was rescued when about to suffer martyrdom. He was supposed to have succeeded as an alchemist in his labours to accomplish the great work. Even the muse of Tasso, like that of Pin-

\* Chronicon Centulensis, lib. iv. cap. 13.

† Prudent. Civ. c. 92.

‡ Chronic. Senoniensis, lib. iv. cap. 34, apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. iii.



dar, does not disdain to mention such men "as the heroes who repelled all kinds of diseases;"\* for after treating how Godfrey was wounded at the first assault of Jerusalem, we are told,

"Erotinus, born on the banks of Po,  
Was he that undertook to cure the knight:  
All what green herbs or water pure could do,  
He knew their power, their virtue, and their might:  
A noble poet was the man also;  
But in this science he had more delight;  
He could restore to health death-wounded men,  
And make their names immortal with his pen."†

Bartholomew de Granville was another learned and noble layman of that age, who composed a work from the writings of Albert the Great and Vincent de Beauvais, which was entitled *De Rerum Proprietate*. Symphorien Champier, in later times, was another example of an excellent theologian and philosopher, a renowned poet, and an experienced physician, versed in all kinds of learning. We find the two-fold character of these men generally recognised on their tombs, as in the inscription on that of Neri, in the Neri chapel at the convent of St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, at Florence, in which the terms "*medico ac philosopho*" are applied to him.—Celebrated in the middle ages were Fracastor, a physician, astronomer, and great poet, and also Speroni of Padua, a physician and philosopher, who was so loved by St. Charles Borromeo as to be admitted to his *Notti Vaticane*. In later times, the influence of piety ceased to distinguish the learning of the physicians, so that a striking contrast to the meek spirit of the theological and monastic disputants was seen in the writings of these lay cultivators of medical science of the sixteenth century, who resembled the classical critics of modern times in making the margin of books their field of battle. The furious and ignoble combats of the anatomists arose when Veselius, from the schools of Padua and Bologna, sent forth a book to prove that Galen had described the anatomy of animals alone, and not of men, and Sylvius replied to him in terms of such outrage and insult. Veselius, the celebrated anatomist, physician of the Emperor Charles V. was known when at Madrid to have opened the body of a gentleman whose heart was found to palpitate, he having probably been only in a trance. The horror inspired by this event was so great, that it was generally believed he had been guilty of dissecting a living man. He was condemned to make a pilgrimage to Palestine, and he died at Zante while on his return.

The study of law was in an early age cultivated by the clergy. In the twelfth century, that of the Roman law, at Bologna, was instrumental to the diffusion of learning. Gratian, who made the celebrated compilation, was a Benedictine monk, who lived there in the middle of that century. Many clerks studied the civil law. St. Philogonus, who succeeded Vital in the See of Antioch, in the year 318, had been an eminent lawyer, celebrated for his eloquence and learning, as well as for the holiness of his life. However, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, masters of law were not desired in the University of Padua. Innocent IV. found it necessary to issue decrees to check the

\* Pyth. Od. iii.

† xi. 70.

ardour for this study, lest the Church should suffer injury, and he prohibited any professor of laws to be admitted to an ecclesiastical dignity. Matthew Paris, writing in the year 1254, laments the prevalence of such studies and says, "Almost all scholars now, forsaking grammarians and philosophers, turn to laws; quas constat non esse de numero artium liberalium: artes enim liberales propter se appetuntur, leges autem ut salaria acquirantur," an opinion very conformable with what was said in a later age of lawyers by the chancellor D'Aguesau, that with them to make one's fortune and to do one's duty, meant the same thing. Hugues de Bercy, a poet who lived in the days of Philippe-Augustus, is still more severe against lawyers, and says, "Les loix apprennent tromperie." The Church commemorates the action of St. Andrew Avellin, who when a young man at Naples studying jurisprudence, and engaged in pleading for private clients, finding himself in a moment of excitement guilty of uttering some trivial falsehood, and soon after coming by chance to the words of the sacred Scripture, "Os quod mentitur occidit animam," was seized with such compunction, that immediately from that hour he renounced all such engagements, and gave himself up wholly to the divine service. In consequence of the precept of Honorius III. there were no professors of law in the University of Paris. In the Complutensian, Ximenes the founder took care, by a severe enactment, that there should be no place for such professors in after times. The same prohibition was maintained in Hiedelberg, Prague, and other ancient academies of Germany.

Without taking any side in this question, one may observe that, in all countries where the modern philosophy prevails, the importance with which this profession is invested, is certainly not a little remarkable. At the same time it would be unjust to overlook the noble character which judicial learning and manners assumed in the ages of faith. History records of Anthony Roselli, that learned and eloquent lawyer of Arezzo, that he was never induced to defend a cause which even appeared to him unjust. In the chronicles of the middle age, lawyers sometimes appear invested with almost a saintly character. They are even assisted by visions. William Lydyngton being employed by the monks of Crowland to support some cause of theirs which was pending, saw in a vision by night, as he lay restless and concerned in reflecting upon the case, a certain reverend hero, clad in the garb of an anchorite, who desired him to take the refreshment of sleep, and added, that he would succeed in course of time. He concluded that it was St. Guthlake who had appeared to him, the patron of that abbey, who having been a great soldier, renounced the world and lived as a hermit in the fens.\* It is impossible to regard, without awe and reverence, the solemn figure of Gothardus, rector of the law students, as he is represented on his tomb in the cloisters of the University of Pavia. Ranulphus, Bishop of Durham, in the days of the Conqueror, wrote a book entitled *De Legibus Angliæ*, which constitutes him the father of English lawyers. The clergy read in their office a sentence from St. Basil, that "fasting makes wise legislators."† We have seen, that in the time of Charlemagne it

---

\* Hist. Croylandensis in Rer. Anglic. Scriptor. tom. i. 502.

† Homil. i. de Jejun.

was imposed upon those who administered the law. When the Catholic archbishops and bishops, and mitred abbots, sat in parliament, men like Chancellor Morton, who had studied the canon law and the law of God, who were spiritually wise, and when the nobles who assisted them,—some of whom, perhaps, could only set their cross for their signature,—legislated for England in conformity to their principles, there were acts of parliament passed and laws enacted, which have stood, and will for ever stand to all posterity, as models of legislative wisdom. The men of our age imagine that it would be well to change them: they attempt it, fall into pitiable mistakes, involve things in confusion, and become justly objects of public derision for their pains.

Such is the general idea of the learning of the ages of faith which will result from a reference to their works. In the next chapter, the constitution and manners of schools, and the history of the rise of Universities, will still further develope it, and can hardly fail to prove interesting and instructive.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

THE institution of schools supported by public authority, in places secured and set apart for instruction, was unknown to the ancient Greeks; and with the Romans, military glory for many ages excluded all study of the liberal arts, so that it was not till the end of the first century of the Christian era that public schools began to be maintained in Rome at the expense of the state. The school of Alexandria, in Egypt, was indeed of great antiquity. From the time of the Ptolemies it had been a seat of learning, boasting of that renowned museum founded by Ptolemy Philadelphus, which contained an ambulatorium, a place for disputation, and a house in which the sophists and grammarians were lodged. Among the primitive Christians it had become very celebrated. St. Jerome says, that from the time of St. Mark the Evangelist it had possessed ecclesiastical doctors. There the mathematics were also studied by the Christians. In order to assist the Church in the computation of the festivals, the Pagans themselves were induced to attend the lectures in the Christian school at Rome, near the baths of Titus. It was to a school of this description that the stoic Pantenus was indebted for his knowledge of the Christian religion, and afterwards he was placed at the head of the very school that had instructed him. St. Clemens of Alexandria used to boast that he had been a disciple of St. Pantenus, which he deemed a greater honour than to be a master himself. In the school of Alexandria flourished Origen, Heraclas, Dionysius, John *φιλώπωνος*, and other learned Christian doctors. This celebrated school was destroyed about the end of the fifth century by the invasion



of the Mahometans. The school of Cæsarea-Palestina was also celebrated among the Christians. St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, St. Basil the Great, and St. Gregory Nazianzen, who studied and taught there, rendered it illustrious: but of its duration we have no certain evidence. St. Basil, departing from Cæsarea to Constantinople, the school of the second Rome, soon became renowned, and here it is supposed was founded by Constantine a seat of letters, furnishing the first instance of a public academy endowed and instituted by authority. That of Rome was equally celebrated, as was also that of Berytus, which three cities had the exclusive privilege of having lectures upon the Roman law. The college of Bangor in Britain was established by monks before the time of Constantine. Shortly after the death of Justinian, Berytus was overthrown by an earthquake, and a fire destroyed what had been saved from that ruin. The school of Constantinople lasted till the beginning of the eighth century, when it was extinguished by Leo the Isaurian. The school of Carthage also was spoken of by St. Augustin as the rival of that of Rome. That of Milan is celebrated for its library, and from St. Augustin having gone to it to teach rhetoric. In the fourth century a number of schools were founded in Gaul by the edict of Valens and Gratian. That in the town of Cleves was eminent, which it appears had existed in the third century, where an Athenian had taught. Marseilles retained its academy, which was so grandly described by Strabo and Cicero. The schools of Bordeaux, Tholouse, Narbonne, and Treves, are expressly mentioned from the epoch of the fourth century; but the professors were only grammarians, both Greek and Latin, and rhetoricians, for no philosophers or professors of law were yet in Gaul.

Of ecclesiastical schools, the earliest that are mentioned are those of Rome, Alexandria, and Nisibe. Such schools were either public or conventual. In the beginning of the sixth century, Cassiodorus, who from a Roman senator had become a monk, lamented the deficiency of these, compared with the secular schools,\* and ascribed it to the wars, which raged in Italy. Edessa was soon after celebrated for its ecclesiastical school. The conventual schools were episcopal and monastic. Of these the first instance is that of Hippo, founded by St. Augustin for the education of young clerics, as a seminary to supply priests to the Church. Muratori describes the desolation of Italy, in consequence of the ravages of the barbarous Goths and Longebards, who nearly destroyed all learning, excepting at Rome and Pavia. As a remedy for this evil, the parochial schools by the clergy became general throughout Italy in the fifth century, which institutions thence passed into Gaul. Thus a council in Narbonese Gaul, in 443, decreed as follows: "It pleases us that all priests, constituted over parishes, according to the custom which is so beneficially established in Italy, should have junior readers unmarried in their houses, whom they shall spiritually nourish, instructing them in the psalms and divine lessons, and in the law of God, that they may provide worthy successors for themselves, and receive from the Lord an eternal recompense,"† In Spain first arose the schools of cathedral churches. This was in the beginning of the sixth century. Children offered by their parents were here to be instructed under the

\* Præfat. ad lib. divinæ et humanæ lection.

† 1 Can. Concil. Vasionensis, ii.

eye of the bishop,\* and to dwell under one roof.† Yet the first Christian schools were always adjoining the cathedral, where was also the hospital for the sick and for pilgrims, and there science and mercy met together, justice and peace kissed each other. The first schools of Paris were opposite Notre Dame, and adjoining the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. In the time of King Robert, the Palatine schools, so called from their being near the palace of Thermes, were on the ascent of the hill of St. Geneviève. The schools of Rheims, under Hinemar, in the ninth century, were celebrated. Young men flocked there from all parts. These schools produced great bishops, abbots, and chancellors of France. His successor Foulques excited emulation by his example, for he did not disdain to study with the youngest clerks.‡ In the year 970, the famous monk of Aurillac in Auvergne, Gerbert, was placed at the head of these schools, and King Robert, son of Hugues Capet, was sent to study under him by his mother Adelaide. Under Guy de Chatillon the youth of the city were also instructed, by the masters of the cathedral school, in the holy Scriptures and in the ecclesiastical computation. At Lyons I saw, adjoining the cathedral, a very ancient building, called the *manécanterie*. It was the cathedral school, erected by Leydrade the archbishop in the eighth century. The name is derived from *mane cantare*, to sing matins, for it was here that boys were instructed in the chaunt. In the eleventh century we find St. Maiolus, a young ecclesiastical student, repairing to Lyons as to the most eminent school, the mother and nurse of philosophy, as St. Odilo calls it.¶ It was king Ina who founded the English school at Rome. We read in the Saxon chronicle, that in the year 816 the school of the English nation at Rome was destroyed by fire. Alfred was a great benefactor to it. The title of one of the great hospitals at Rome is derived from its proximity to this school of the Saxons. In the time of St. Bernard it was usual for some, even of monastic students, to be sent to Rome. St. Peter, the venerable abbot of Cluny in the twelfth century, sent some of his disciples to Pope Lucius, to whom he wrote in these remarkable terms: "According to the will and command of your eminence, we direct from the bosom of Cluny's cloister these beloved brethren and sons to the common father, yea to our and their especial father; we commend them to apostolic piety. For the cause of God and by virtue of obedience they leave their native soil, repair to a foreign land, and seek not to fly from death itself, which the Roman air is accustomed to inflict so quickly upon our countrymen; so that like lambs they go to the sacrifice."§ In the sixth century also arose the schools of the new family of the Benedictines, which spread themselves over the whole western church. Of these the school of the monastery in the island of Lerins became first most celebrated. This was founded by St. Honoratus, and it produced Maximus, Faustus, Hilary, Cæsarius, Vincent, Eucherius, Salvius, and many others. The school of Seville in Spain was also renowned for having produced the great St. Isidore. Of this school Mariana says, "that as if from a citadel of wisdom many came forth illustrious both for probity of manners,

---

\* Concil. Toletano, ii. Can. i.

† Anquetil, *Hist. de Reims*, i. 152.

§ S. Petri ven. Epist. lib. iv. 24.

† Id. iv.

¶ Bibliothec. Cluniac. 282.

and for learning.”\* Isidore gave this precept for all similar schools in Spain: “Cura nutriendorum parvulorum pertinebit ad virum, quem elegerit pater, sanctum sapientemque atque ætate gravem, informantem parvulos non solum studiis litterarum sed etiam documentis magisterioque virtutum.” Until the time of Charlemagne letters found an asylum in England, and especially in Ireland in the monasteries. Henry of Auxerre, in the life of St. Germain, which he dedicated to Charles the Bald, says that the Anglo-Saxons used to resort unto the monks of Ireland, for the sake of learning, and that they received from them the manner of forming their letters; and Bede is a witness that in the year 664 “many of the noble and middle classes of England left their country and passed into Ireland, for the sake of divine reading, or of a more continent life, and some within the monasteries, others going about from cell to cell delighted in receiving instruction from masters, all whom the Irish liberally received, giving them daily food without price, as also books and instructors gratuitously.”† Then returning home, they enriched their own country with learning. Renowned schools and colleges were in the abbeys of Louth, of St. Ibar in the island of Beg Eri, on the coast of Wexford, in the fifth century, in the abbey of Clonard in Eastmeath, and of Rathene, in those of Lismore, Ross, and Bangor, of St. Mary at Clonfert, and in that of St. Ninnidius in the island of Dam-Inis in the Lake of Erne, and in the abbey of the isle of Immay on the coast of Galway.‡ At this time Theodorus, a Roman monk, sent by Pope Vitalianus, came to Canterbury, where he was made archbishop, having for companion the abbot Adrian. These were both learned in the Greek and Latin. When Alcuin presided in the school of York, a crowd of scholars resorted thither from France and even from the farthest parts of Germany. St. Liudger was sent from Saxony to York to study under him, and remained there three years and six months. Tanner admits that the English monasteries, till the moment of their destruction, were schools of learning and education, and that all the neighbours who desired it might have their children taught grammar and church music without any expense to them.§ In the abbey of Jumièges, where our Edward the Confessor was educated, there were many schools for the monks and for seculars, in which rich and poor were alike received, and the poor could send their children, because they were nourished at the expense of the monastery.¶ In the monastery of St. Benedict on the Loire, there were at one time five thousand scholars. Two descriptions of colleges flourished within all the Benedictine monasteries, of which one was for lay youths.\*\* The Scholasticus was the master of the school, who not only excelled in the science of the divine Scriptures, but also in secular learning, in mathematics, astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, music, rhetoric, and poetry. Trithemius adds, that whenever an abbot found no monk in his abbey competent to discharge this office, it was no subject of shame to apply to some other monastery for a monk to fill it.†† No college in these ages was more celebrated than that of

---

\* Lib. vi. Rer. Hispan. cap. 7.

† Monast. Hibernic. 410.

§ Hist. de Jumièges par Deshayes.

†† Withem. in Chron. Hirsan. ad an. 890.

† Hist. Anglic. lib. iii. cap. 27.

‖ Notitia Monastica, Pref.

\*\* Mabillon de Studiis Monast. i. cap. 11.



Fulda, of which Raban was preceptor. Even bishops did not disdain to study in the schools of learned abbots. Thus we read of Burchard, Bishop of Worms, who followed the instructions of Olbert, Abbot of Jumièges, "a noble and powerful bishop did not disdain to submit himself to the form of a disciple: and a humble and foreign monk did not fear to assume the part of a master over such a man."\* In the Benedictine monasteries were always two divisions of boys for learning, forming the interior or claustral and the exterior or canonical schools; the former for those that were dedicated to religion, the latter for seculars. The care which was expended upon all these boys is described by Udalricus, in the third book of his customs of Cluny, where he concludes that it would be difficult for any son of a king to be nourished with greater diligence in a palace than was the least boy of the lowest rank in Cluny. Many sons of kings were educated with the children of the poor in monasteries of Benedictines. Lothaire, son of Charles the Bald, was educated in the abbey of St. Germain L'Auxerrois, Theodoric III. at Kala, Louis VI., Pepin, parent of the great Charles, and Robert, the second king of the third race, in the abbey of St. Denis. Even the exterior schools were under strong monastic discipline. Ekkehard the younger says, in the sixth chapter of his book on the monastery of St. Gall, that there were places of strict discipline, not only in the cloisteral but also in the external schools, from which, besides clerks, who were often there nourished, there came out many illustrious bishops. Joachim Vadianus, though an adversary, bears testimony that in the masters of these schools were required piety and erudition, the former being estimated by innocence of life and love of the divine worship, the latter by the judgment and excellence of the learning which was possessed. Preceptors were often chosen from the monasteries for the episcopal schools. "And in all these offices," says Mabillon, "if they ever received any thing as a gift from the munificence of their disciples, they used to spend it in pious uses." Thus we read of Sigebert, that he applied many things to the use and ornament of the church of Jumièges, which he had received as voluntary presents from the liberality of those whom he instructed. With Charlemagne arose the Palatine school, which was held in the palace, of which the scholars were in the court. This was so far ambulatory, that wherever the emperor went to reside it established itself in the imperial palace. Louis-le-Debonaire and Charles the Bald continued to maintain the school in their palaces, in which had always presided from the time of Charlemagne the most learned monks, Alcuin, Peter of Pisa, Clemens, Claudius a Spaniard, Amalarius the Deacon, Angelomus the Monk of Luxeuil, and Scotus, who gave lessons on the holy Scriptures, on tradition and on the liberal arts.† The zeal of Charlemagne for learning is finely evinced in his admirable letter to Baugolf, Abbot of Fulda, and to other abbots. By means of Alcuin, it was said, that a new Athens had arisen in France. It is not denied that there had been, as we have shown, schools in Gaul before his time: for Bede speaks of Sigebrecht, King of the East Saxons, having fled to France, and says, that when he returned to his kingdom, he instituted a school in imitation of what he had seen in France, in which boys were instructed in

\* Mabillon, *Præfat.* in v. *Sæcul. Bened.* § 3.

† *Id.* *Præf.* in iv. *Sæcul. Ben.* § 8.

letters, Bishop Felix himself assisting.\* But the wars and troubles of the eighth century were a great obstacle to the progress of learning. The Council of Valence in the year 855, recommends the erection of schools for divine and human sciences, and the ecclesiastical chaunt, because from the long interruption of studies, ignorance of the faith, and the want of all science have invaded many of the churches of God. The exertions of the great Alcuin and other British monks under Charlemagne and his son Lewis, led to the extension and improvement of schools. Alcuin, amidst all his labours of composition, gave public lessons in the monastery of St. Martin at Tours, "I your Flaccus," he says in a letter to Charlemagne, "according to your exhortations and good desire, apply myself to minister to some under the roof of St. Martin the honey of the holy Scriptures. Others I endeavour to inebriate with the old wine of ancient learning, others I begin to nourish with the apples of grammatic subtilty. Some I try to illuminate in the science of the stars, as if of the painted canopy of some great house; I am made many things to many persons that I may edify as many as possible to the advantage of the holy church of God, and to the honour of your imperial kingdom."

In 813, a celebrated synod at Mayence ordered the clergy to admonish the people that parents should send their sons to the school whether in monasteries or in the houses of the parochial clergy, that they might learn there in the vernacular tongue, the symbol and the "our Father," and whatever was necessary for instruction in the Catholic faith.† There were parochial catechetical schools which were also gratuitous, and in another synod in 800, it was ordered that the parochial priests should have schools in the towns and villages, that the little children of all the faithful might learn letters from them; "let them receive and teach these with the utmost charity, that they themselves may shine as the stars for ever. Let them receive no remuneration from their scholars unless what the parents through charity may voluntarily offer."‡ Indeed, so early as in the fifth century, the clergy had not only cathedral schools, but also others in the country villages. In the year 529, the Council of Vaison strongly recommended the building of these country schools. Yet a late writer of the life of Caxton asserts that parochial grammar schools in villages were first established in the fifteenth century! In the monasteries there were the major and the minor schools. In the latter, boys were taught the symbol, the "our Father," the Psalms, chaunt, arithmetic, and grammar. In the major schools the various branches of learning were cultivated, sacred letters, mathematics, music, poetry, the oriental languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic. The most celebrated were in the monasteries of Fulda, St. Gall, Hirsfeld, St. Alban of Mayence, Bec, Corby, Milan, St. Deny at Paris, St. Maximus at Treves, at Rheims, Autun, Tours, Strasburg: but there were many others, a list of which is given by Launoi, in his book *De Scholis celebribus a Carolo Magno in Occidente instauratis*. Of Fulda, in the ninth century, Trithemius writes as follows: "There flourished there a most learned body of monks, under the abbot, Raban Maur. Their fame and memory were in great price with emperors, kings and

\* Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. 18.

† Concil. Moguntini Can. xlv.

‡ Synod. Aurelianensis, anno 800, Can. xx.

princes, not only on account of the sanctity of their lives, but also of their incomparable learning." Not only abbots sent their monks to this school, but also from all parts of Germany and Gaul, noblemen used to send their sons to be instructed by Raban Maur; and as he was most mild, he received them all with great care, and instructed them according to the age and disposition of each. The necessity for episcopal schools was inculcated in the celebrated Council at Metz, under Chrodogang, shortly before the time of Charlemagne. The school was to be attached to the cathedral, where the clergy were to live in community under the bishop. The fathers of the sixth Council of Paris in 829, petitioned the Emperor Louis to found three public schools in some three proper places of his empire, "that the labour of his father may not by their neglect come to be in vain, that the holy Church of God may gain honour, and the emperor an eternal memory." What was the result is unknown. In 859, another council invokes pious princes and all bishops to provide for the support of schools of the holy Scriptures, and also of human literature, "that on all sides, public schools may be constituted for both kinds of erudition, divine and human."\* The writer of the life of Bishop Meinwercus, describes the episcopal school of Paderborn as "flourishing in both divine and human science." Multiplied exercises of study occupied youths of good disposition and boys, all under claustral discipline. There were the trivium and quadrivium, music, dialectics, rhetoric, grammar, mathematics, astronomy, and geometry. There flourished Homer and the great Virgil, Crispus, Sallust and Statius. It was a play there to make verses, and sentences, and sweet songs; and of the beauty of writing and painting executed by these students, we see proofs to this day. A Council at Rome in 826, under Eugene II. ordained that there should be three kinds of schools established throughout Christendom, episcopal, parochial, in towns and villages, and others wherever there could be found place and opportunity. In 823, Lothaire I. promulgated a decree to establish eight public schools in some of the principal cities of Italy, "in order that opportunity may be given to all, and that there may be no excuse drawn from poverty and the difficulty of repairing to remote places." Among these were Pavia, Cremona, Florence, Verona, and Vicenza. In the tenth century, St. Gerard, Bishop of Toul, drew into his diocese several learned monks from Greece and from Ireland, who opened schools which produced some eminent men. At the same time, the fame of the school of Magdeburg, under Otheric, was spread through all Germany. It was here that St. Adalbert, the apostle of Prussia, was educated, a beautiful account of whose holy youth, and of the affectionate diligence of his masters, is given in the ancient chronicles of that city.† The Teutonic knights in Prussia used to send boys of talent into Germany, and especially to that school, to be educated in Christian learning, and alms for their support used to be collected in Germany.‡ Van Espen supposes that, from the eleventh century till the Council of Trent, the episcopal schools had fallen into decay.|| Alexander III. by various constitutions, had endeavoured to obviate this evil. The third Council

\* Concil. Saponar. Can. x.

† Id. ii. 293.

VOL. II.—15

‡ Voigt. Geschichte Preussens. i. b. 4. c.

|| De Jure Eccles. part ii. Tit. xi. § 6.



of Lateran, in 1179, says, "Since the Church of God, as a pious mother, is bound to provide that opportunity for learning should not be withdrawn from the poor, who are without help from patrimonial riches, be it ordained, that in every cathedral there should be a master to teach both clerks and poor scholars gratis."\* This decree was enlarged and again enforced by Innocent III. in the year 1215. Hence, in all colleges of canons, one bore the title of the scholastic canon. Pope Innocent III. who with Honorius III. was most zealous for the increase of schools, extended the law to other churches besides cathedrals, that there might be a master to teach gratis.

The formal establishment of the universities, dates from the thirteenth century; but celebrated schools had existed long before, in the places where they were instituted. Joffridus, Abbot of Crowland, who succeeded Ingulphus, sent monks to his manor of Cotenham, near Cambridge, who used to walk to Cambridge every day to give lectures in a barn, and in a short time they collected a crowd of disciples, so that soon the studies were regularly pursued as follows: Brother Odo, early in the morning, taught grammar to the younger boys: at prime, brother Terrius delivered to youths the logic of Aristotle, with the commentaries of Porphyry and Averoes: at tierce, brother William read the rhetoric of Tully and Quintilian: master Gislebertus, on every Sunday and Saint's day, preached the word of God to the people, and on all week days he expounded before sext the text of the sacred page to learned men and priests.† Similar details might be discovered relative to the commencement of studies in the other great universities of Naples, Bologna, Paris and Oxford, which were all established about the same time; for Europe then forming almost but one country, institutions and manners followed every where the same impulses contemporaneously. However, the universities of Padua and Perugia did not arise till a century later. In Spain, the three greater universities were those of Salamanca, which was founded by Alphonzo el Sabio, and afterwards favoured by the especial patronage of Queen Isabella, of Alcala, which was instituted by Cardinal Cisnero, and of Valladolid, which, through the patronage of the Austrian dynasty, rose to great eminence. The most distinguished of the other twenty-four lesser universities of Spain, were at Sarragossa, Valencia, Seville, Grenada, Itruria, Cervera, Toledo, and Santiago. The word Universitas, signified corporation, and did not necessarily imply universality of the subjects of study. At Montpellier and Salerno there were universities of medicine solely. The beginning of the fourteenth century was distinguished by the multitude of colleges which were founded. There were forty-two in the university of Paris alone. The schools of the Dominicans and Franciscans were now found every where. At Paris, the ancient episcopal school in the Island adjoining the cathedral, was transferred to the Mountain of St. Geneviève.

The universities were rendered illustrious by the lectures of the great monastic doctors, most of whom were of noble and even of royal blood. Albert the Great studied successively at Padua in his father's house, and

---

\* Cap. i. x.

† Petri Blesensis Continuatio ad Hist. Ingulphi in Rer. Anglic. Scriptor. tom. i.

at Paris, where he gave public lectures on Aristotle in the year 1219. The place Maubert, is so called from this Magister Albert; for he was obliged to lecture in the open air, there being no hall large enough to contain his audience. In one of the courts of Magdalen College, in Oxford, may be seen the stone pulpit projecting from the wall, from which lectures or sermons were delivered in the open air. At Paris, a street in the quarter of the university mentioned by Dante, is still called the Rue du Foin, where the hay or straw used to be distributed to the scholars to furnish seats. Albert then retired to Cologne, as General of the Dominican order, and afterwards became Master of the Sacred Palace at Rome; he also assisted at the Council of Lyons; wearied with his labours he returned to his convent at Cologne, where he died in the year 1280. The number of scholars at these universities was prodigious. Nearly ten thousand foreigners of every nation, and many of them very illustrious, were at the University of Bologna in an early age. St. Thomas of Canterbury and Peter of Blois, were students there. Pope Alexander III. was the Professor of Sacred Scripture, when exalted to the Pontificate. The masters and students at the University of Paris were so numerous, that when they went in procession to St. Denis, the first ranks were entered into the church of the abbey when the last were leaving the church of the Mathurins in Paris. The university on one occasion promised to send twenty-five thousand scholars to increase the pomp of a funeral. It was usual to study at more than one university. The great Pope Innocent III. had studied at Rome, Bologna, and Paris; and Alexander V. shone both at Paris and Oxford. Men were students till the age of thirty or forty. Guillaume de Champeaux, after having taught philosophy at Paris with great applause where Hugues and Richard de Saint-Victor were his disciples, became himself, at an advanced age, the disciple of Anselm of Laon, in order to study theology under him, after which he returned to Paris, where he was the first to establish a double school of theology, one in Paris itself, and the other in the abbey of St. Victor which he founded. On those ancient tombs of doctors in the cloisters of Pavia, the master, like Nazario, is represented instructing scholars who are themselves bearded men; and at the college of the Jesuits at Rome, shortly after its foundation, Dr. Martin Gregory says, that prelates and bishops, and other honourable personages used to sit out of the press at lattice windows looking into the school, hearing and writing down the lesson of divinity. The church commemorates a trait in the life of St. Camillus de Lellis, that in his thirty-second year, feeling the advantage that learning would yield him in consoling the sick and dying, to which work of charity he devoted himself, he was not ashamed to enter into the first class of grammar with little boys and thence proceeded to study for the priesthood. The same is related of St. Ignatius Loyola. Sometimes the whole life even of a poet was cloisteral through his anxiety to benefit men by his writings, as was said of "gentle Champier."

Tout ton vivant tu n'as fait aultre chose  
 Que ta personne tenir tousjours enclose,  
 Pour profiter quelque chose aux humains  
 Tant que des livres tu as composé maints,  
 Tu as parlé des saintes et des saints;

Et au dernier, comment pour estre crains  
 Et bien aimé de leurs nobles vassaulx  
 Les princes doivent vivre soir et mains,  
 Et supporter bonnement leur villains,  
 De tout cecy tu as moult bien parlé  
 Car le peuple ne doit estre foulé.\*

The jurisdiction enjoined by these new academies throughout Europe was drawn from the constitution of Frederick I. Barbarossa. By decree of Pope Clement V. in the Council of Vienne in 1312, the profession of Oriental languages was added to the ancient faculties for the purpose of providing missionaries to the east. At Rome, Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Salamanca, the Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldaic, began to be generally taught. Then arose the schools of the Jesuits, and after the Council of Trent, the episcopal seminaries were multiplied, in which it was expressly provided that the students should assist at mass daily. Some councils, chiefly Belgian, prescribed schools on Sundays and festivals after mid-day, that the poor children may be instructed in the rudiments of the faith.†

The favour and indulgence shown by rulers to schools of learning may be traced to the immunity from gifts granted by the Cæsars, Augustus, Vespasian and Adrian, to the professors of the liberal arts. Domitian seems to have withdrawn this dispensation, which when restored was restricted to Asia by Antoninus Pius.‡ Constantine the Great confirmed and increased all the privileges of learning, of whom three constitutions in favour of schools are in the thirteenth book of the Theodosian code. This emperor was not the first to appoint salaries for the professors, since Vespasian, Adrian, and Antoninus Pius, are recorded to have set the example, confining their patronage to the four sects of the Stoics, Platonists, Peripatetics, and Epicureans.¶ To the multitude of students, who flocked from all parts to Rome in the fourth century, Valentinian, Valens, and Gratian gave rules and privileges which may be seen in the code of Theodosius. By this law, the students were forbidden to frequent theatres or taverns, and all whose lives did not correspond to the dignity of liberal things were to be beaten publicly and expelled. No student was to remain after the age of twenty, which prescription Keuffel justly regards as an instance of imperial jealousy most injurious to learning. The discipline and privileges of the academy of Constantinople were similar. Theodosius raised professors of learning to the dignity of counts of the first order, a title invented by Constantine, and divided into three degrees of honour. For Constantine thought, that all who partook in the labours of governing in a civil or military situation should be styled his companions. They were also raised to the dignity of the spectabiles which placed them next to the first, who enjoyed the chief honours in the empire. Julian decreed that the Christians should neither teach the liberal arts nor be received for instruction in them by pagan professors, with the exception of one whose name was mentioned, but this persecution did not last long. Justinian was illiterate, and no lover of learning; but

\* Gouget, x.

† Espen in Jur. Eccles. p. ii. tit. ii. cap. 5.

‡ Keuffel, Hist. Originis ac Progress. Scholarum inter Christianos, 33.

¶ Vide Heineccii Antiquit. Rom. lib. i. tit. 25.



such was his zeal for building magnificent temples, that he took for that purpose the stipends which had been granted by former kings to the masters of liberal sciences. The Emperor Frederick I. in his famous constitution which is the base of university jurisdiction, gave several privileges to students and professors. At this time the dangers to which solitary students were exposed, travelling and passing into strange countries, were so great, that by this decree it was made a peculiar crime to touch or wound any student or scholar travelling, or remaining in a foreign land for the sake of learning. All such persons are placed under the especial protection of the emperor, who is most anxious to defend and favour with peculiar love those by whose science the whole world is enlightened and reduced to obedience towards God and to rulers who are his ministers, who make themselves exiles, for the sake of science, and poor from being rich. On occasion of a great sedition at Paris, between the town and the students respecting the price of wine, which led to a great interruption of scholastic exercises, Henry III. of England addressed an invitation signed with his own hand to the masters and to all the scholars of Paris, in which he says, "Humbly compassionating the straits and tribulation which you suffer at Paris from an unjust law, and wishing piously to assist you in reverence for God, and his holy church; we wish to signify to you, that if it please you to pass into our kingdom of England, we will assign for your use whatever city, borough, or town you may choose, and secure you all liberty and tranquillity." More than a thousand in consequence removed to Oxford, and by order of the king the rate of lodging was not to exceed a certain sum. Some French authors suspect that the King of England excited the sedition in order to profit by it in gaining possession of those learned men. To the twelfth century may be traced the origin of theological degrees, but it was not till the year 1562, that the Council of Trent authoritatively established for the whole church degrees in theology and canon law. The degrees of universities were conferred by giving the chair, the book, the cap, the gown, the gold ring, and the kiss, and the profession of faith. The first signified the faculty of teaching others. The book was presented open to signify that the candidate must study with diligence, and then it was given into his hands closed, to signify that it was not only in books but in the mind that wisdom was to be retained. The cap belonged to the clerical office. The ring given to doctors signified the mystic marriage to science. The kiss was to denote the fellowship which should exist among the learned. The profession of faith was prescribed by Pius IV.\* Great honour and pompous ceremonies belonged to universities. Foreign kings would assist as spectators before an assembly of five thousand graduates, which was the number at Paris when there were twenty-five thousand scholars. The grandeur of the purple yielded to the scholastic dignity. In the year 1476, the University of Paris refused to give the degree of doctor to a man for whom the kings of France and of Spain had requested it.† The zeal for these foundations continued in Catholic countries unabated. Lorenzo de Medicis, to facilitate the instruction of youth, opened a college at Pisa, where he assembled the

\* Keuffel, *Historia Scholarum*.

† *Historia Universit. Parisiensis a Bulæo*.

most excellent masters of Italy. There were at least eight universities founded in France during the fifteenth century, while nothing but the work of dissolution proceeded in England, though it had been immediately preceded by Wolsey's foundation at Ipswich. The last instance of the establishment of a university was in the year 1547, when Charles of Lorraine, Archbishop of Rheims, uncle of Mary, queen of Scots, solicited and obtained from Rome the establishment of a university at Rheims on the model of that at Paris. It became distinguished for the piety as well as the learning of its masters and scholars. But the schools of the Jesuits were now combining the advantages of a university without its danger. "Hast thou seen in Oxford, written over the school doors, *Metaphysica, Astronomia, Dialectica*, and so forth? So is it here within one college," says Dr. Martin Gregory, speaking of that at Rome, shortly after its foundation by St. Ignatius.

The literary meetings held in the convent of the Santo Spirito at Florence, were the first embryo of academies in Europe; and the first academy was Platonic. The present Latin translation of Plato, and of the whole works of Aristotle, though defective, evinced the zeal of Cardinal Bessarion its founder for the study of the ancient philosophers. In this convent the monks used to discourse in Greek and even in Hebrew. These meetings originated with the learned friar Louis Marsigli, around whom men of letters used to assemble and enter into disputations.

Such then were the ancient institutions of education for the propagation of learning; for of others which belong to the history of modern foundations I find no trace excepting among the Turks, who were the first to have military colleges, as was natural under a religion which was to be propagated by the sword. The Christian princes had not followed their example even so late as in the age when Savedra wrote.\* It would be in vain to look back to ages of charity divine, and honour high, for any institution resembling those schools from which the offices of religion were to be excluded as a doubtful thing, and which men were equally to fill with faith and heretic declension, sanctioning in the eyes of artless and unguarded youth by their intellectual ministry, and perpetuating by the associations of early life arising from it, error as well as truth. No mention here need be made of these, in favour of which philosophy hath no arguments though civil powers may think fit to legislate. At present, I return to the ancient schools and universities, of which we have now seen the rise and progress during ages when the object of education was to render souls innocent, to stand once more beautiful in their Maker's sight. Many interesting characteristics of the former demand our attention: for, in the first place, the situation in monasteries removed from the dissipation that may occasionally at least prevail in great cities,—yielding the healthful air of the country and the beautiful aspect of woods or mountains, where the scholar, in the sweet and silent studies of his youth, learned to associate lessons of piety and devout exercises with the love of nature, was peculiarly favourable for the purpose of education. The evening walk of the students of the Cistercian abbey of St. Urban, is a happy spectacle. The being able to feel at home in its vast halls, and galleries, and peaceful cloisters, and then to range through the

---

\* Christian Prince, ii. 406.

noble woods which surround it, might seem almost of itself an education. The importance of these first impressions is quite incalculable, and the wisdom of the middle ages recognised the necessity of attending to them. "Colleges ought to be placed in the country," says Bonald, "that there may be no external pensioners to introduce the corruption of the town within its walls, who might receive instruction, but who could not receive education like those lodged within the college. Salubrity of air, innocence of manners, and habits of a country life, are advantages for which no city could offer compensation. Such were the ancient monasteries for the education of youth."\*

Lord Bacon remarks the need of places for learning, all tending to quietness and privateness of life, and discharge of cares and troubles. What is termed a character, may indeed be formed in the boisterous stream of the world, but a genius is fostered amidst the stillness and peace which enable the soul to hear the sweet voice of Nature. It was the general opinion of the learned in the middle ages, as of the ancients,† that education could best be administered in a foreign country. John of Salisbury cites the words of an old man of Chartres, describing the keys of learning to unfold truth to philosophers,

"Mens humilis, studium quærendi, vita quieta,  
Scrutinium tacitum, paupertas, terra aliena,  
Hæc reserare solent multis obscura legendo."

And he supplies this comment, "For to the humble God gives illuminating grace, enabling them to understand truth, and they despise not the person of the teacher nor the doctrine, unless opposed to religion; and without this, all capacity of genius, tenacity of memory, and diligence of study, will only serve to lead men into greater error, as the swift horse sooner carries his rider from the way. Simplicity and anxious study to find the sense, attend humility: that a quiet life is necessary to wisdom, even the heathen sages taught; and this cannot be found without the necessities of life, and on the other hand, without the absence of luxurious delights,—for the abundance of things extinguishes the light of prayer, and therefore joyful poverty is an excellent thing to assist studies, as many of the ancients also found. Philosophy requires a foreign land, and sometimes makes one's own country a foreign one, because it engrosses a man wholly, and prevents him from being engaged in domestic concerns."‡ And to the same effect speaks Vincent of Beauvais, who says, "A foreign land is one of the helps to learning and philosophy, because it does not suppose the mind to grow forgetful of its end, and it is the first of virtues to learn gradually to withdraw the mind from these visible and transitory things, that afterwards one may be able to relinquish them freely."§ To the young scholar in a foreign land, solitude is the mother of tears and piety. Savedra, from the judgment of his chivalrous lore, goes so far as to say, that youth hardly ever succeeds in its own country: friends and relations render it too insolent; but in foreign lands the case is otherwise, for necessity renders it there more circumspect, and obliges it to form its manners to gentleness, to conciliate favour. In his own country a young man feels more free and more

\* Legislat. Primit. liv. iii. 63.

† De Nugis Curialium, lib. vii. cap. 13.

‡ Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita cap. v.

§ Speculum Doctrinale, lib. i. cap. 29.



assured of receiving pardon; but where he is unknown he fears the rigour of strangers: besides, it is in foreign countries that he loses insensibly that rudeness of manner, that retired humour, that ridiculous vanity, which prevail among those who have not frequented various nations.”\* Methinks now I hear some voice repeat the poet’s invitation, and say,

“Revele to me the sacred nursery  
Of virtue, which with you doth there remaine,  
Where it in silver bowre does hidden ly  
From view of man and wicked world’s disdaine.”†

Where like that happy race of which an older poet sings, “the children of heaven, nourished with illustrious wisdom, with the fruit of that holy country where it is said celestial harmony gave birth to the chaste Muses, enjoy for a time that bright pure air, and those sweetly blowing winds, which refresh the unviolated land, where dwells that Love which was seated by the side of Wisdom, the handmaid of every virtue.”‡ Who, in fact, would not wish to behold the interior of these Catholic colleges, which have left such a sweet and holy memory! “We had loved it with fondness like our native home,” says one whose early years were spent in the English college at Douay. “Domestic harmony and mutual confidence had indeed at all times made a college life a happy life; and I will affirm, that many now living in different classes of society, as many before us have done, look back with complacency to Douay, and call the happiest period of their life the years of youth spent there in preparatory studies, with companions and friends who were dear to them?”§ It is not thus, we may observe, that the sophists look back to the days of youth, and to the place of their instruction. But the schools of holy Church were not their mother.

Far from the tumult of cities, the young Levites who are destined to bear the holy ark of the new alliance, and those also who are to serve God in the walks of secular occupations, are assembled to enjoy the sweets of solitude, and to animate each other with the love of study and of wisdom, having before their eyes great examples, which always constitute the most perfect school of life. Here they apply to a course of profound learning, which often occupies them till an advanced age. Their religious exercises commence and close each day. The solemn wind of night still sighs in the towers, but the bell has sounded, and every one rises from sleep. The dawn has not yet streaked the sky, but the long corridors give echoes to the passing steps of the student. In the chapel is already collected that throng of devout youths and venerable masters, whom Christ in his own garden chooses to be his help-mates, some of whose devoted lives, perchance, shall be hereafter sung deservedly in heights empyreal. Let England no more boast of those roses of the divided houses which dyed her fields in the blood of her children. Let her remember rather that band of innocents which she sent forth to Liege and Lisbon, to Douay and to Rome, who returned to her bosom each year as the flowers of the martyrs, among which, as the venerable Bede would say, neither roses nor lilies were wanting; for many of them were worthy to receive crowns composed of both,—

\* Christian Prince, lib. ii. 208.

† Spencer, vi. 1.

‡ Eurip. Medea, 822.

§ Narrative of the Seizure of Douay College.—Catholic Magazine.

white for angelic purity, or purple for the passion. In their cells and common halls simplicity is every where seen, and the humblest offices are imposed upon all in succession, to temper the grandeur of their vocation or the dignity of their state. On the evening of two days every week they walk abroad, either through some magnificent park, under the shade of a darksome wood, or to the summit of some rocks, or in a delicious valley watered by a stream, which winds among its flowery meadows. These are their pure enjoyments. Far from spending their days in sensuality, under the shade of the altar, a frugal and even austere nourishment prepares their bodies for a mild and spiritualised, for a long and healthful life. Their minds are tuned to every gracious harmony, are imbued with every grand and solemn truth. Music is the language of their thoughts; while sacramental lore and saintly science form them to wisdom. From time immemorial in these Catholic schools, all over the world, it was the custom to open the classes with a mass to the Holy Ghost,—with the hymn, “Veni Creator Spiritus, mentes tuorum visita,”—that is, they implored the Divine grace to visit their minds, in order that, whilst they partook of the salutary fruit of the tree of knowledge, they might be strengthened against the enemy of mankind, who might tempt them to pluck the poisonous fruit, which that tree also bears. They sought not glory in their devoted labours; they provided surer means for sweet tranquillity during the rest of life than the reward of superior ability, which the poet vainly boasted could secure it:—

ὁ νικῶν δὲ, λοιπὸν ἀμφὶ βίον  
ἔχει μελιτόεσσαν εὐδάν  
ἄλθλων γ' ἔρεκεν —\*.

The triumph of a youth in the schools of holy Church did never sound as a note of mourning to his unsuccessful companions: unlike the conqueror in the ancient games, he did not by his victory occasion to others,

Νόστον ἔχθιστον, καὶ ἀτιμότεραν  
Γλώσσαν, καὶ ἐπίκυφον ὄμον,

a detested and shameful return home, a mournful silence, and a desire of darkness to cover them.† He did not rob them of a mild welcome, nor of the sweet smile of their mother as they came to her arms; they returned not as through streets full of enemies, fallen from on high, and oppressed with calamity.‡ These were the cruel victories of heathens, barbarous and delusive,—but the crowning of the Christian conqueror was a common joy, and he alone felt humbled. Religion even had in store her own sweet balms, to administer, with kind and cunning hand, to the sorrows of young students, who were depressed with a sense of their own inability to serve and honour the masters of their education; for she taught them, that the inferiority of their talents took nothing from them in the eyes of God, and rendered them no less dear and precious to their common mother: she taught them, that failure and disappointment might be more conducive to their future happiness than the most brilliant success: she always said, “Give me but your will, and I

\* Pindar, Olymp. x. 1.  
VOL. II.—16

† Olymp. viii. 5.  
L

‡ Pyth. viii.

engage to make you wise and happy: I ask not genius, I ask not strength, health, success, crowns, applause,—I ask but your heart.”\* True, the discipline of her colleges was strict and watchful; but how small a part of education is the attainment of knowledge, in which vain sophists now say it all consists! The human character is beheld in the greatest deformity in a man without education, and possessed of immense general knowledge,—who knows much, but every thing knows ill.—

πᾶλλ' ἠπίστατο ἔργα, κακῶς δ' ἠπίστατο πάντα.†

Religion did not sanction that system against nature, which takes the infant from its mother's breast, and leaves the youth to lament in the words of the Forsaken Ion,—

——— χεῖρον γάρ, ὃν μ' ἐχρῆν ἐν ἀγκάλαις  
μητρὸς τρυφῆσαι, καὶ τι τρυφῆναι βίου  
ἀπεστερήθην φιλατῆς μητρὸς τρυφῆς.‡

Not the planet-like order of her temples, which is to glorify Heaven's mercy, but the unhallowed mechanism of the factory, which is to enrich commercial tyrants, demands that sacrifice. All that she required of the child was, that on first coming to the use of reason, he should make an act of the love of God, because, if that were omitted, he would be guilty, as St. Thomas Aquinas held, “of mortal sin.” But though she imposed no exercises beyond their strength, she knew that they are blessed who have borne the yoke from their youth; she knew that the source and the root of all goodness and of all honour, is the having been from youth well instructed. The Spaniards ascribed even the cruelty and savage temper of Don Pedro to the negligence or ignorance of his governor, Don Alonzo Albuquerque, who, say they, might have tamed him when young.¶ What a train of evils did the ancient philosopher discern as attendant upon false discipline,—*ψευδοπαιδείαν*,—ignorance and error, sadness and weeping, avarice and incontinence!§ Discipline, therefore, with her, assumed a decided and inflexible organization; but with what love was it imagined? with what benignity was it maintained? “Sinite parvulos venire ad me,” said our heavenly master in the school of God. “O sweet Master,” continues Thomas de Kempis, “in how few words dost thou enable all men to learn humility! These holy words console the humble and the poor, comfort the simple and the innocent, teach us all to become like children, without malice or guile, that we may be beloved by God and men.”\*\* Jesus in the Heart of Youth, a Dialogue between Jesus and a Boy,—such are the titles of works composed by the most learned men,—a Bartolommeo dal Monte, a Dionysius, surnamed, through admiration at the depth of his philosophy, the extatic Doctor. “We wish,” says the holy Benedict, “to institute a school for the service of the Lord, and we hope that we have not placed any thing sharp or painful in this institution; but if, after the council of equity, there should be found, for the correction of vice and the maintenance of charity, any thing a little too rude, let no one, through fear of that, fly from the way of safety; at the commencement

\* Le Petit Manuel du Pieux Ecolier: Paris, 1828.

† Margites.

‡ Eurip. Ion. 1390.

¶ Savedra, Christian Prince, i. 16.

§ Cebetis Tabula.

\*\* Manuale Parvulorum, i.



it is always narrow, but by a progress in faith and in a regular life, the heart expands, and we learn to run with an ineffable sweetness in the way of the commandments of God." These are the last lines of the Preface to his Rule, which was for the strongest aspirants to perfection. Less severity was shown to the weak. The master of the monastic schools was not to be hard, clamorous, and reproachful; but putting on the bowels of a mother, he was to be gentle and affectionate, so that whatever the scholars had at heart, they might securely and sincerely trust to him.\* The masters and professors were expressly charged to converse often with the scholars, to take part in their exercises and plays, that no occasion might be lost of useful admonition, and of winning their hearts, by evincing love and benevolence.† "What obedience, and humility, and brotherly love," cries Dr. Martin Gregory, describing the college of the Jesuits at Rome, "when, but for order sake, there is no superior in heart and mind, when the greatest divines in the world, highest in place and dignity, will ask permission that they may serve the youngest students at the table! when the good fathers of our English college wash the feet also of our scholars when they arrive first at Rome! When, in fine, all are fathers and brethren and sons in respect of each other!" Affectionate solicitude was constantly proposed as their duty.‡ "The master must be full of gentleness and humanity for his disciples," says St. Bonaventura, "whom he should regard as his children, so as to evince towards them the tenderness of a mother with a father's firmness."|| "The master," says brother John, a barefooted Carmelite, "should always begin with some prayer like the following: 'Humillime Rex cordium Jesu Christe, per viscera misericordiæ tuæ, in quibus visitasti nos oriens ex alto, obsecro te, creare digneris in me cor humile et purum, cupidissimum secretæ eruditionis tuæ: ut in schola humilium discipulorum tuorum fiam dono tuo sapiens ad regendam sine deceptione novellam prolem, dulcissime genitricis tuæ.'" Like Moses, the meekest of men, like David, the most humble and gentle, like the holy father Benedict, who could not be angry even against those who wished to poison him, the master must be a pattern of the tenderest humanity, showing always a cheerful and mild countenance, to win the hearts of his disciples, never irritated at their faults or moved at their weakness, bearing with the rudeness of some, unconquered by the difficulty of others, so that no one of them may ever fear to approach him by day or by night. This sweetness and affection will render the way of Christian perfection still more delightful to them. This will soften hearts of stone, and give them hearts of flesh. Every day he must remember to offer for his scholars the most holy sacrifice of the altar, imitating the example of him who said, "Lest perchance my sons may have sinned." But if at any time, through their faults, he should feel his love for them to grow cold, he should, with great effort and earnestness of prayer, endeavour to banish that temptation: he should throw his eyes upon the celestial Master, our most sweet Redeemer, who never despised his poor, rude, abject apostles, obnoxious to

---

\* Statuta Ordinis Præmonstratensis, cap. 18.

† Instructio Magistri Novitiorum, Auct. Joan. à Jesu.

‡ S. Bonaventura, Speculum Novitiorum, cap. 13.

† Id. cap. ix. art. 2.

so many passions, but loved them, bore with them, and instructed them with the sweetest love. On the other hand, he must not evince a partiality for some over the rest, on account of their more eminent sanctity or other graces; but must endear himself to all by studying the good of all. In reproving faults, let him never use harsh words, but as the Apostle says, if any one be tempted so as to commit a fault, we must instruct him in the spirit of gentleness; it is not said he must reproach or insult, or adopt any such mode, but that he must instruct him; he must be ready also to excuse them, and to come forward himself in their behalf, urging their inconsiderate youth; and when it is absolutely necessary to punish the fault, he must show that he separates the person from what he punishes, and he must speak soothingly and affectionately to him, as to something most amiable, and far removed from the turpitude of vice; he must avoid also the words of magisterial authority, and, like one of the disciples, as if he had not himself attained to perfection, he must associate himself with their labours; thus in words and also in deeds he must be kind and loving towards them. For his books, he should have the Holy Gospels and the Epistles of St Paul, the Ascetics and Rule of St. Basil, the Morals and Pastoral Care of St. Gregory, the Confessions and Meditations of St. Augustin, the Opusculum of St. Bernard and of St. Bonaventura, the works of Cassien, Hugo de Saint Victor de Claustro Animæ, Ricardus de Saint Victor, Humbertus de Eruditione Religiosorum, Climacus, Innocent and Gerson, Thomas à Kempis, the treatise of blessed Vincent de Vita Spirituali, the works of Blossius and of Denis the Carthusian, the Institutions of Taulerus, Albertus Magnus de Virtutibus and Landulphus de Vita Christi. In vulgar tongues he should have the works of P. Lewis of Grenada, Avila, Diego Perez, Arias and St. Theresa, and others. And for history he should have St. Gregory of Tours, Eusebius, Theodoret, and the Lives of the Saints. The master should take care to employ his talents well. Spiritual men, to whom education is entrusted, should remember that they perform their duty to God when they commit to memory the fruit of their erudition, along with pleasant and delightful histories; that in walking or sitting with the novices they may be able to exhilarate and entertain them, for their labours must be refreshed with joys. Therefore he should relate histories to them, and order others who have the ability to charm their companions with relations, and he may vary his conversation by a thousand innocent modes of diversion, which may excite a laugh without breach of modesty, instituting little contests to determine who can imagine the most perfect instance of the love of God or of hope, and allowing little plays to be represented on the sacred history, and to this he should add singing of hymns and psalms, to raise their souls to heaven. As for extraordinary recreations he must provide that all games be consistent with modesty and mutual love, conducive to the delight of the mind and the refreshment of the body. He should vary also his mode of instruction, and make use of pictures and emblems, to administer delight, and keep them ever impressed with a sense of true perfection, that they may perform all their actions for the love of God, or on account of God. He must explain to them what they are to hold respecting the mysteries of faith, and he must explain the commands of the Decalogue. Youth being impatient

of rest, he must avail himself of that love of acclamation which Plato remarks in them, and give them occasion to make formal acts to inflame their hearts with the love of holiness and the horror of vice. He will therefore cry, "Vivat Jesus Christus Dei altissimi filius," and they will all answer, "Vivat."—"Vivat serenissima Regina cœlorum," and they will answer, "Vivat."—"Convertantur universi homines ad fidem et charitatem Dei ac Domini nostri Jesu Christi," and they will answer, "Convertantur;" and then they may pronounce an anathema against forgetfulness of God, ingratitude, despair, disobedience, luxury, and pride; and this exercise of acclamation and of malediction will conduce to fervour and piety.\*

This ideal of discipline passed also to the mind of persons in the world. Christine de Pisan speaks of the poor human fragility in the days of youth, on which every well ordered sense should have compassion, as on a thing subject to passions, to diverse desires, and natural assaults; and he says that masters ought to correct and form it to good manners by good examples: rather, "que par verbérations ou bateures maistriseuses."† St. Gregory of Tours says, that all the ecclesiastical colleges in his time were expressly formed to secure that innocence of life which is the distinctive characteristic of the clerical office. A scholastic class was governed so far like the Church itself, that the ultimate object therein was to save souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.‡ Well then may we exclaim with the poet, who lived at the moment of the transition, when the education of faith was giving place to that of a new philosophy,—

"Let none then blame them, if in discipline  
Of vertue and of civill uses lore  
They did not form them to the common line  
Of present dayes, which are corrupted sore;  
But to the antique use which was of yore  
When good was only for itself desyred,  
When simple truth did rayne and was of all admyred;  
For that which all men then did vertue call  
Is now call'd vice, and that which vice was hight,  
Is now hight vertue, and so used of all."||

The young were taught to live in a house with little noise. There were to be no commands, troubles, incessant wants, insolence, impatience, or meddling with other people's affairs further than to assist them. The ordinary food of scholars was plain, and generally of one kind.§ The dress, as may be still traced in some of the old Catholic foundations in England, was modest, and at the same time manly, requiring a hardy exposure of the limbs. Plainness and simplicity marked every object around them. Who does not love to find himself in one of those antique halls, lighted through small high grated windows, pierced in the walls of vast solidity, furnished with hard benches, notched and worn and stained with the ink of centuries, where every thing seems in the same state as in the time of St. Edmund or William of Paris? With what delight does one escape from Turkish Ottomans and the luxurious sickly

\* *Instructio Magistri Novitiorum*, Colon. 1613, cap. 2.

† *Livre des Fais*, &c. chap. 11.

‡ P. Judde, *Œuvres Spirit.* tom. iii. 354.

§ *Spencer*, v. 1.

§ In France and England the scholar's fare was mutton.



atmosphere of gaudy dissipation, to collect one's thoughts, and to recover the recollections of sweet and holy study, within the plain unvarnished walls of a monastic college! How do they bring before one's eyes the men of better days! We seem to behold united the bright school: there sit the race who slow their eyes around

"Majestically move, and in their port  
Bear eminent authority; they speak  
Seldom, but all their words are tuneful sweet."

There seems to rise Richard of St. Victor, Richard more than man,  
as he is styled by Dante, there to stand,

"One, whose spirit, on high musings bent  
Rebuk'd the lingering tardiness of death:"

He whom Dante beheld in Paradise, as the eternal light of Sigebert,

"Who 'scap'd not envy, when of truth he argued,  
Reading in the straw-litter'd street."\*

Here would our saintly countryman, Edmund of Abingdon, read lessons upon theology, where many and illustrious men used to be assembled to hear him, and it is related that during these readings, they used often to close their books, not being able to refrain from tears.† Here one is reminded that the labour of education was undertaken solely for the honour of God, and in virtue of holy obedience, without the least inducement, or indeed thought, of remuneration, and here one feels how great was the dignity which the Catholic religion imparted to every stage of the scholastic learning.

But let us return to the studious disciples, the pious sons of the holy Nicholas and Gregory, who are all animated with the innocent ardour to excel in wisdom, and whose conversation is angelic as their looks; whom the ancient poet would have commemorated as walking in the law of their fathers, and reviving their ancestral goodness, collecting riches for their minds, shunning injustice and arrogant youth, and cultivating wisdom in the quiet retreats of the muses, σοφίαν δ' ἐν μυχῶσι Πιερίδων.‡ What a goodly sight is it, cries Dr. Gregory Martin in his description of the college of the Jesuits at Rome, to see in the streets long trains of students, two and two; within the college a whole swarm coming out of divine schools into one court together, while new companies succeed them in new lessons and other readers! Beautiful are the portraits of the Christian student which we discover in the writings of the middle ages. Such as represent the young Meinrad, in the ninth century, receiving his education in the celebrated abbey of Reichenau, on the island in the Lake of Constance,§ and Bruno, who afterwards became one of the apostles of Prussia, of whom a friend, who had known him from boyhood, says, "Every morning when going to school, before he left his lodging, he used to be at his prayers while we were playing."|| Lothaire, the son of King Charles the Bald, was committed to the care of Heiricus, Abbot of St. Germain at Auxerre. The abbot speaks of his disciple as follows, in a letter to his father: "In years a boy, in mind

\* Parad. x.

† Pind. Pyth. vi.

|| Ditmar Annalista Saxo.

† Vita ejus apud Martene Thesaur. Anecd. tom. iii.

§ Tschudi Einsiedliche Chronik. 2.

a philosopher, I confess to you that in natural disposition and in genius he is estimable beyond others of his age." The language of parents and of guardians was not then directed to undo the work of education, and to counteract that of the instructors of youth. Eginhard wrote to his son, who was then at the schools of Fulda, and his letter was to this effect: "My son, study to imitate good manners, and take care that you never offend him whom I wish you always to follow; but be mindful of your profession, be diligent to obey the commands of him to whom you have wholly committed yourself. Learned in these things, and familiar to their labours, you will want the advantage of no vital science. As I advised you while present to exercise yourself in the study of oratory, so I again exhort you to leave nothing untouched of that noble science which you may acquire from the genius of the great and most abundant orator; but above all, remember to imitate those good manners in which he excels; for grammar and rhetoric, and all other studies of liberal arts, are vain, and greatly injurious to the servants of God, unless by the Divine grace they know how to be subject to virtue; for science puffeth up, but charity edifies. *Melius mihi quidem est ut te mortuum videre contingat, quam inflatum et scatentem vitiis.*" The preceptor whom this pious parent, the secretary and historian of Charlemagne, desired his son to imitate, was the celebrated Raban Maur.\* Let us take another example. "Anselm archbishop, to Anselm, his nephew in the flesh, and in love his dearest son, salutation and the benediction of God. Since I love you especially amongst all my relations, I desire that you may advance well before God and before all men. Therefore I admonish and exhort you, as my dearest son, that you study diligently to further that for which I have sent you into England, and that you suffer no time to pass in idleness. Apply assiduously to grammar, and exercise yourself more in prose than in verses. But above all things, guard your manners and actions before men, and your heart before God, that when I shall see you, by the favour of God, I may rejoice in your progress, and that you may rejoice in my joy. Farewell, I commend to God your body and soul."† Boleslaus, Duke of Poland, when a boy, was sent to Paris to study, and the chronicle of Cluny testifies that he led a most innocent and diligent life, devoting himself with all his heart and affection to love and serve his Creator. It is related also of St. Philip Benitius, a noble Florentine, that when a youth studying at Paris, he united his scholastic application with such piety, that he inflamed many with a desire of the celestial country. The memory of such students made the recollections of a Catholic college like a book of holy instruction, to teach men how to live and die well. Those of St. Acheul, as the little book so entitled demonstrates, were associated with many sweet and affecting examples, both in life and death, of the holiness of youth. St. Joseph Calasancius, of a noble house of Arragon, gave indications in his tender years of the especial charity which he was to exercise towards poor boys; for while himself a little scholar, he used to assemble them, and give them lessons in the mysteries of the faith and in sacred prayers. It was he who afterwards, on coming to Rome, being divinely admonished that he was destined to train the minds of the young poor to

\* Mabillon Præfat. in III. Sæcul. Benedict. §. 8.

† S. Anselmi, lib. iv. Epist. 31.

knowledge and piety, founded the order of poor regular clerks of the Mother of God for that purpose, which was approved of by Pope Clement VIII. and Paul V. : though he afterwards applied himself to the assistance of every class, yet his principal instructions were always afforded to poor boys, whose schools he used to superintend, and he would accompany them to their homes, for he beheld in each of them the child Jesus. It is on the day of his office that the church repeats the words of St. John Chrysostom, "What is greater than to train the manners of the young? certainly I esteem as more excellent than any painter or sculptor, or any other artist whatever, the man who knows how to mould the youthful mind." In her office on the 12th of June, she relates of St. John of Sahagun in Spain, that when a scholar boy he used to lead a most holy life, and that he used often to place himself upon some raised spot, and make a discourse to other boys, exhorting them to virtue and to the worship of God, and that he used to compose all differences among them. In the year 1590, God inspired a young scholar at the university of Douay, with the resolution to found a Carthusian monastery in his own country; this was John Vassour, Seigneur de Rabadingue. The resolution grew with his years and studies, and in the end he fulfilled it at Laboutillerie.\* St. Edmund, who was born of poor parents at Abingdon, was sent to Paris to study; such was the ardour and the facility for learning in those ages. His mother gave him a hair shirt, which he was to wear twice or thrice a week. When he used to go out into the fields with other boys, he would withdraw himself, and walk alone to meditate, and every night on going to bed, he used to write the name of Jesus with his finger on his forehead. And the writer of his life says, that he used to be advised by him to do the same. The origin of this practice was thus related: "One day, having as usual left his companions in order to walk alone through the meadows to meditate, he met a beautiful boy, who looked like an angel from heaven. This stranger saluted him familiarly, and when Edmund expressed surprise, he said, 'I wonder that I should be unknown to you, since I always sit by your side in school, and am constantly in your company, and follow you wherever you go.' Edmund perceived him to be our Lord, and he was then told by him to write his name, Jesus Nazarene, every night, upon his forehead, diligently and deliberately, for that this would be a defence to him against sudden death;† and St. Edmund accordingly charged his friend to adopt that exercise." While at college he had a Psalter with a gloss, a book of the twelve Prophets, also glossed, and the decretal Epistles; all which books he sold, and full of compassion gave the price to poor scholars. One scholar, having an infirmity in the hand, Edmund gave a large sum of money to a physician to cure him.

The ardour for studies among the saintly disciples, is often mentioned in the annals of monastic schools. The father of Abundus, we read, did not wish that his son should continue as a student. He was a pious

\* Hist. des Saints de Lille et Douai, 660.

† A writer in the Quarterly Review, No. LXVIII., translates the words of the vision, "A practice that would secure any person from sudden death," as if there was no distinction between the soul being guarded in the event of sudden death, and the body being secured from death.



youth, and had a face like an angel; his mother privately gave him the habit which scholars wear in the churches, and sent him to another school; and the innocent boy was thus enabled by his mother's affection and firmness to pursue the life which he loved in the church and in the schools.\* Guibert de Nogent furnishes another instance, but more remarkable, as he laboured under all the disadvantages of a private education, which from his statement appear to have been grievous. "My mother," he says, "reared me with the most tender care; hardly had I learned the first elements of letters, when she entrusted me to a master of grammar. This master had learned grammar late in life, and therefore had made less proficiency in the art; but what he wanted in knowledge he made up in virtue. From the moment in which I was placed under his direction, he formed me to such purity, he kept me at such a distance from all the vices which often accompany early life, that I was preserved from the usual dangers. However, notwithstanding all my application, I made but little progress under him; though he used to give me a shower of blows, he yet evinced such friendship for me, he occupied himself so much about me, he watched with such assiduity for my safety, that so far from experiencing the fear which is usual in that age, I used to forget all his severity, and I obeyed him with a certain feeling of love. On one occasion, my mother discovered that I had been ill-treated, complained bitterly of my master, and said, 'I no longer wish you to become a clerk, if in order to learn letters you must suffer such treatment;' but as for me, when I heard her words, looking at her with all the anger that I was capable of showing, I said, 'though it would be necessary for me to die, I would not cease on that account to learn letters, and to wish to become a clerk.'" Victor Hugo paints the ideal of a student of this kind, amidst the more dangerous companions of the university, "the scholar Frolo," he says, "was early taught Latin, and he grew in stature over the Lexicon. Silent, peaceable, and modest, he was never implicated in any of the mutinies of scholars, nor was he ever engaged in quarrels, nor for the cry, 'dare alapas et capillos laniare;' but to make amends, he was assiduous at the greater and lesser schools of the rue Saint-Jean de Beauvais. The first scholar whom the abbot of St. Pierre-de-Val, the moment he began his lecture on canon law, used to perceive, always glued, opposite his chair, to a pillar of the school of Saint-Vendregesile, armed with his ink-horn, chewing his pen, scribbling on his worn knees, and in winter blowing on his fingers, was Claude Frolo. The first auditor whom Messire Miles d'Islien, doctor in decretals, saw arrive every Monday morning, quite out of breath, at the gate of the school of the Chef-Saint-Denis, was Claude Frolo. Hence at sixteen, the young clerk could have made head in mystical theology with a doctor of the church, in canon law with a father of the councils, in scholastic theology with a doctor of Sorbonne."

The young Archduke Leopold of Austria maintained a thesis of philosophy and theology against some fathers of the society of Jesus, in presence of the Emperor Ferdinand II., his father, and the whole council. Where there was not this virtue and zeal for learning in youth, we

\* Hist. Monasterii Villariensis, lib. ii. cap. 10. apud Martene Thesaur. Anecd. tom. iii.

sometimes find in the writers of the middle ages the reflections of after life, expressed in language of the most affecting piety. Such an instance occurs in the Testament of Lydgate, the monk of Bury, in which he speaks of his youth at the age of fifteen years as follows :

“Voyde of reason, gyven to wyfulnesse,  
Frowarde to virtue, of Christ gave lytell hede,  
Lothe to lerne, loved no vertuous besynesse,  
Save play or myrth, straung to spell or rede,  
Folowyng all appetytes longyng to chyldehede,  
Lightly tournyng; wylde and selde sadde,  
Wepying for nought, and a none after gladde.

For lytell worth to stryve with my felawe,  
As my passyons dyd my bridell lede  
Of the yarde stode I sometyne in awe  
To be scoured, that was all my drede,  
Loth towarde scole, lost my tyme in dede,  
Lyke a yong colt, that ranne without bridell,  
Made my frendes gyve good to speade in ydell.

I had in custome to come to scole late,  
Not for to lerne, but for a countenance  
With my felowes redy to debate,  
To jangle and jape, was set all my plesaunce,  
Whereof rebuked, this was my chevynaunce  
To forge a lesyng, and there upon to muse,  
When I trespassed, myself to excuse.

To my better dyd no reverence,  
Of my soveraynes gave no force at all,  
Were obstynate by inobedyence,  
Ranne into gardeyns, appels there I stoll,  
To gather fruites spared hedge nor wall,  
To plucke grapes on other mennes vynes,  
Was more redy than for to say mattynes.

Lothe to ryse, lother to bedde at eve,  
With unwasshe handes redy to dynere,  
My pater noster, my crede, or my beleve  
Cast to the cocke; lo this was my manere,  
Waved with eche wynde, as dothe a rede spere,  
Snobbed of my frendes such tatches to mende,  
Made deffe eare, lyst not to them attende.

My port, my pase, my fote alway unstable,  
My loke, myne eyen, unsure and vacabounde,  
In all my workes sodenly chaungeable,  
To all good thengs contrary I was founde;  
Nowe oversad, nowe mourning, nowe jocounde.  
Wylfull, reckeles, madde; startyng as an hare  
To folowe my lust, for nothing wolde I spare.

Entryng this tyme into relygion,  
Unto the ploughe I put forthe my hande,  
A yere complete made my professyon,  
Consydering lytell change of thylke bande  
Of perfectyon, full good example I founde,  
The techyng good, in me was all the lacke,  
With Lottes wyfe, I lokyd oft a backe.

Taught of my maisters, by virtuous dyscipline,  
 My loke restrayne, and kepe close my syght,  
 Of blessed Benet to folowe the doctryne,  
 And bere me lowly to every mener wyht,  
 By th' advertence of myne inwarde syght,  
 Cast to God warde of holy affectyon,  
 To folowe th' emprises of my professyon."

This disposition, even in the most negligent, to recognize the virtue of the masters of their youth, is characteristic of these ages of faith, when religion secured for all persons in authority that filial reverence to which length of days is promised. Even Quintilian admonishes the disciples that they should love their preceptors no less than the studies themselves, and believe them to be the fathers, not indeed of their bodies but of their minds, and he adds, that this piety conduces much to study.\* Dante says, that so long as life endures his tongue shall speak how he did prize the lessons of Brunetto, and when he meets that benign paternal image of his ancient master he says, "I dared not tread on equal ground with him, but held my head bent down, as one who walks in reverent guise." Octavian de Saint-Gelais, who wrote the *Séjour d'honneur*, in the reign of Charles VIII., describes in an affecting manner, how he met the shade of his old master, Magister Martin, when traversing the forest of adventures, whom he styles, *Mon feu patron et tres honoré maistre*.

"Interpréteur de la sainte pagine  
 Aigle d'honneur, philosophe tres-digne,  
 Ha que moult fut mon mal pesant et grief,  
 De voir mon maistre et personne honorée,  
 Hors du siècle.—  
 A Paris fut jadis mon directeur,  
 A Sainte Barbe, en son noble collège  
 Régent fut-il de mes frères et moy,  
 Pûs son sçavoir le logea chez le roy,  
 Ou il vivant en honneur transitoire,  
 Fut convaincu par mortelle victoire."†

In the time of St. Thomas Aquinas, the manner of teaching was according to the practice that still prevails in the public schools of Rome and Padua, and of other places. The master delivered his explanation like an harangue; the scholars retained what they could, and often took down short notes to help their memory. "The act of instruction, *viva voce*," says Vincent of Beauvais, "has I know not what hidden energy, and sounds more forcibly in the ears of a disciple transfused from the mouth of a master."‡ Quintilian had made the same remark, proving the superior advantage of oral instruction over every other; and he says, that youths should never be permitted to testify their approbation in a noisy manner, but that they should hang on the judgment of the teacher, and should believe that to be well said which is approved of by him; as for that indecorous, and theatrical, and most vicious custom, of giving applause to each other, it should be never permitted, being contrary to scholastic institution, and the most pernicious enemy of studies; but they should attend to the masters modestly and intensely, and the master ought not to attend to the judgment of the disciples, but the disciples

\* *Instit. Orat. lib. ii. 10.* † *Gouget, tom. x.* ‡ *Speculum Doctrinale, lib. i. c. 37.*



to that of the master. Who would not now suppose that this was written by some scholastic monk of the middle ages? and yet they are the words of Quintilian;\* so much farther removed are we than our Catholic forefathers from the wisdom of the ancient civilization. A correct idea of the mode of instruction in monastic schools may be formed from examining the four ancient tombs of doctors, which are in the cloisters of the convent of St. Dominic at Bologna, where each doctor is represented sitting in the midst with a book open before him, which he explains, as is indicated by his hand stretched out, while around or in front is seated a crowd of students in a religious habit, who are placed before desks, on which they are writing down as if from his lecture, or turning round to consult each other. These groups have, indeed, an air of antiquity, which denotes that they refer to days gone by; but yet the venerable aspect of our college halls during an academic discourse, can often revive within one a sense of the ancient dignity of learning, and inspire that noble confidence which the Roman orator desired to feel before his judges; for as everywhere else truth has little support and but little strength, so in these places one feels that false envious prejudice is weak, that while it may prevail in popular assemblies, here it must be prostrate; its force is in the opinions of the unlearned, but it is far from the understanding of the prudent: its sudden and vehement impulses giving place, after a while, to senile lamentations,† can never enter within the walls which hear of universal tradition, Catholic authority, and immutable eternal truth. It is with a feeling of devotion that one enters the school-rooms in the monasteries of Rome and Bologna, in which there is always an image or portrait of our blessed Lady. The world and all its miserable interests, all its fears and commotions, its rumours, and its policies, seem excluded; here youth was placed beyond the hearing of the horrors of political debate; while cities are in a ferment, and chambers of assembly resound to the sanguine declamation of inflammatory orators, the meek and cheerful scholar consorts with his Virgil or his Thomas à Kempis, and enjoys bright and saintly visions. If the rumour of discord should penetrate to their quiet halls, the young will still never put on the visage of the times, and be, like them, to gentle spirits troublesome. Better they would esteem it to be at once compromised, like the children of Mycale, who fell under the murderous sword of Thracians, though that was an event which of all others in the Peloponnesian war, Thucydides thought the most worthy of being lamented and compassionated.‡ When the English college at Douay was invaded by the agents of the revolution, by spies and guards, it might have been presupposed that no one could then venture to retain his cheerfulness, *οὐδὲ μὲν ἡβων.* But there was only occasion given to show, as a venerable priest observes, “what college boys can do in the way of generous self-devotion and dauntless enterprise; for every one then was intent upon devising and practising some ingenious plan to rescue various articles of value from the grasp of the plunderers. To carry off a lamp or a sacred vestment some would ascend the funnels of chimneys, and others would descend the external walls by ropes to enter windows of forbidden rooms. Strange as it may appear,” continues the narrator, “never do

\* Instit. Orat. lib. ii. 2.

† Pro A. Cluentio.

‡ Lib. vii. 29.

I remember a more cheerful flow of spirits than what was manifested during the whole time. We sang *God save the King* and *Dulce Domum*. Such a behaviour astonished every one, friends and enemies wondered alike how we could sing in such circumstances, and sometimes heaved a sigh of concern to tell us we did not know what we had still to expect. Our classical and devotional exercises went on as usual, and continued till the 9th of August, when the message came on Saturday night, which ordered us to leave the college for a prison. The clock had struck eight, and we were waiting for the summons to night prayers. We were soon ready, for we had little to carry away. Some went to take their last farewell of the church, by a short prayer before the altars, which, alas! were soon to be no more." Thus closed the oldest seminary of English Catholics, the mother and nurse of so many martyrs, the bulwark of faith, as Baronius calls it, created by God to protect the Catholics of this land against the blasts of heresy. It was overthrown by French atheists in the frenzy of revolutionary zeal; but it was reserved for the statesmen in our age of that people which of all the world boasts to be the most generous, in the cool deliberation of their cabinet, under the cloak of a zeal for God's unpolluted worship, by a judicial sentence, pronounced in all the solemn forms of equity, to legalize and consummate its ruin.

It will now be necessary to retrace our steps in order to allude to the rise of the universities, which was preparing a new æra in scholastic history, and there were circumstances attendant on this transition which must be noticed. Nothing is more certain than that the purest and noblest motives, and the most enlarged charity, gave birth to these great institutions. At all times it was considered a meritorious application of alms to support poor scholars in the academies of learning, and to contribute to their education. Origen from the age of eighteen exercised himself in the work of instruction, and refused every present that his friends offered him, although he was obliged to sell his books of grammar for four obols, which a man promised to pay him per day for his nourishment. In the tenth century, we read that Wolfgang, afterwards Bishop of Ratisbon, would receive no honours or emoluments from his intimate friend, Otho of Treves, but at length he yielded so far, that scholastic boys and youths should be committed to his care without any remuneration; this was before he had retired to the monastery of Einsiedelin, whence he was raised to the see of Ratisbon. The same charitable zeal for the education of youth distinguished the Belgian prelates, of one of whom it is said, such was his solicitude in educating boys, and in instituting scholastic discipline, that even when he went on a journey, whether long or short, he led his young scholars with him, for whom he had also a preceptor and a quantity of books, with the other utensils of scholars.\* In the will of Charles de Balzac, Bishop of Noyon, it was ordained that Montlhery, and three other places, should each furnish a boy to be presented by the curate to the Celestines of Marcoucis, from whom he was to receive, during three years, the sum of one hundred livres, to enable him to study at college, while the same sum was to be paid, as a marriage portion, to a maiden of each place.†

\* Mabillon, *Præfat.* in *V. Sæcul. Benedict.* 3.

† Lebeuf, *Hist. du Diocèse de Paris*, x. 184.

In many places, as at Rome, education was wholly gratuitous. The Archduke Leopold of Austria, besides repairing deserted or ruined churches, and enriching many episcopal sees, founded, for the augmentation of the Catholic faith, numerous classes for young scholars; he established colleges and seminaries, building them in a style of magnificence, and giving the government of them to learned monks. François de la Béraudiere, Bishop of Périgueux, founded a seminary in that city, and placed a versified inscription upon it, stating, that in quitting the world he left to posterity his book, his church rebuilt, second to no other, and a seminary founded at his expense for the nourishment of poor scholars. "May gracious heaven grant," it added, "that posterity may receive great utility, and may God vouchsafe pardon for my past sins."\* Sometimes these poor scholars were supported by casual charities. In the year 1246, there was established at Rheims the scholastic society of the Good Children, which imposed a rigorous rule of religion, having obtained it from Archbishop Ivelle. These poor scholars were directed occasionally to go out two by two to beg alms for the community.† Sometimes they were indebted for their education to the charity of individuals. Monteil speaks of a note by Pierre Pispier, a monk of the Augustinian monastery of Tours, respecting an alms of fifty sols tournoys, which the king had given him to support him during his studies in the university of Angiers.‡ Pope St. Urban V. supported more than a thousand scholars at different academies, and supplied them with books.

Unquestionably, the zeal for learning was fervent at the time when the universities arose: yet it would be a great mistake to imagine that they owed their origin to a mere human ambition for promoting science and literature. It was simply faith and charity which originally led to their foundation; for the will and power of kings would not have sufficed to establish them if religion had not inflamed many of their subjects with a desire to impart to the poor the inestimable advantages of sacred learning. The colleges of the university of Paris were founded by devout persons for poor scholars. That of Navarre was founded by Jeanne de Navarre, wife of Philippe-le-Bel, in the year 1304. This was for seventy poor scholars, twenty children students in grammar, thirty students in logic and philosophy, and twenty in theology. The grammarians were to receive four sols per week, the philosophers six, and the theologians eight. The college of Thirty-three, on the mountain of St. Geneviève, was founded by a poor priest for poor students of theology, to the number indicated in the name, corresponding with the years of our Saviour's life. The college of Boncourt was founded in 1357, for eight poor students, who were to have each four sols per week; and the celebrated Scotch college, founded in 1323, by David, Bishop of Murrai, in Scotland, was also for poor Scotch students. Mary Stuart made them legacies at her death.¶ The college of Cornouaille, in Paris, was founded in 1317, by a clerk of Brittany, for poor scholars of the diocese of Cornouaille. The college of the Lombards was founded in 1333, for Italian scholars who should not have more

\* Gouget, xvi. 13.

† Hist. des Français, iv. 412.

‡ Anquetil, Hist. de Reims, liv. iii.

¶ De St. Victor, Tableau de Paris, tom. iii. 603.



than twenty livres of rent: it was called the House of Poor Italian Scholars of the charity of the Blessed Mary. The college of Montaign was founded in 1314 for eighty-four poor scholars, in honour of the twelve apostles and the seventy-two disciples. The Sorbonne itself, according to the plan of Robert de Sorbonne, was for the poor: it was a community of poor masters, "*pauperes magistri*," who were to give lessons gratis. The college of Boissi was for scholars who resembled its humble founder, Etienne Vidé, who declared that they must be poor and of low origin, "*qui non sint nobiles, sed de humili plebe, et pauperes, sicut nos et prædecessores nostri fuimus*." The college of Harcour was founded in 1280, by Raoul de Harcour, a canon of Paris, of an illustrious house of Normandy, for poor scholars of that province.

The same spirit gave rise to all the similar foundations in England, Spain, Germany, and Italy. At Pavia there are gratuitous colleges of a magnificent order, founded and still supported by noble families, the Caccian and Borromeon, the last of which supports thirty-two students. Some colleges were appropriated to particular nations or orders. Such were at Bologna the magnificent college for Spaniards and that of the Belgians, founded by a silversmith of Brussels for youths of that city, who were to be chosen there by the company of silversmiths. But generally, poverty alone had privileges in these places of learning; and if the rich did repair to them, they were admitted only on condition of conforming to the discipline of the poor. In the university of Pisa the scholars were obliged to be dressed in a kind of uniform of a given colour. The cloth was of inferior quality and of a low price, and even the greatest and wealthiest signor, who was inscribed on the roll of scholars, was forbidden to put on a more noble cloth.\* In some colleges at Paris the students could only expend one sous per day for their nourishment. The offices each day were terminated with prayer for the souls of the charitable founders.† Not even a state of utter destitution excluded youth from the advantages of a university education. The class of Spanish students who live upon the alms dispensed at the gates of convents, who have no other property than their class-book and their gown, and some of them no other lodging but the peristyle of some church, may be seen at the present day regularly attending the classes, receiving degrees, and not unfrequently carrying off academical and ecclesiastical honours by their sheer merit, without having any other recommendation. At the end of the annual course they quit the town, and wander about all the summer in bands of four or six, provided with guitars, singing student songs, and begging alms. Many students, who belong to rich and noble families, consider it a refinement of gentility to join these bands, whose manners have created a certain simple and romantic character, that is now almost peculiar to the Spanish student.

In consequence of the advantages afforded to learning in the universities, it became a desirable object for the monks, who inhabited the provinces, to have houses there for the reception of a certain number of their students, who might still dwell in cloisters, so as not to acquire the spirit of the world;‡ and accordingly other colleges were built for

\* Statuta Studii Pisani et Flor. ann. 1479.

† Monteil, tom. iv.

‡ Mabillon de Stud. Monast. xii.

that purpose. So early as in the eighth century, the monasteries of Clairvaux and Villemoustiers, and others, had houses for students in Paris,\* but in the thirteenth century the custom became general. The college of Cluny, in Paris, was for students of that order, who should be sent to Paris to pursue their studies. It was founded in the year 1269. In the time of our Henry IV. the monks of Crowland speak of their scholars studying at Cambridge.† John Wisbech, abbot of Crowland, in Edward IV.'s time, built chambers in the college of the monks of Buckingham at Cambridge, for the use of the scholars of Crowland who might be sent there to prosecute their studies.‡ The Benedictines of Canterbury, Durham, and Gloucester, had separate colleges under those names for their youth at Oxford. Each convent in Paris had scholars from convents of its order in the distant provinces, and even from those in England and Germany. There was a college there for the students of the abbey of St. Denis.¶ And this was the case at all the other universities of Europe. The provincial Council of Cologne in the year 1536, recommended that some of the junior monks of each monastery should be sent to Catholic universities. Nevertheless, there were evils attending this arrangement which made devout men in those ages lament the preference given to the system of universities over that of the ancient monastic schools, and some will be of opinion, that the experience of centuries has only confirmed the justice of their apprehensions.§ We shall see in another place that the abbots were alarmed at sending their students to inhabit cities, and that the young men were themselves unwilling to go. The congregation of the Scholars' Valley arose in the year 1201. Four professors of the university of Paris, preferring solitude to the world, and the life of contemplation to the glory of the schools, retired into a desert valley of Champagne, in the diocese of Langres, where the bishop allowed them to build cells. Some young scholars of the university followed them to this solitude, and this re-union of young disciples constituted the congregation or order of the Vale of Scholars.\*\* The most exact discipline was indeed maintained in the monastic colleges in the universities. The rules for the students of Cluny, when pursuing their studies at Paris, were very strict: they were never to go into the city excepting with leave of the superior, and attended by masters. The utmost sanctity was to reign in the college.†† But still, amidst such a multitude of scholars from all nations, it was impossible to obviate every evil. St. Augustin removed from Carthage to Rome in consequence of the boisterous manners of the students in the former school. "The chief cause of my going to Rome," he says, "was my hearing that young men studied there more quietly, and that they were kept in order by a better discipline: that they might not break insolently into the school of a master whom they did not follow. At Carthage, the license of the scholars is odious and intemperate: they burst in furiously, and commit so many injuries with

\* Hist. Monasterii Villariensis, i. cap. 8, apud Marten. Thesaur. Anecd. tom. iii.

† Hist. Croylandensis, Rer. Anglic. Scriptor. tom. i.

‡ Id. 560.

¶ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, iii.

§ Joan. Devoti Instit. Canonic. lib. ii. tit. 11.

\*\* De St. Victor, Tableau de Paris, ii. 1214.

†† Henrici I. Abb. Clun. 29, Statuta Bibliothec. Cluniac.

wonderful stupidity; for which laws should punish them unless custom were a patron. They think they do all this with impunity, when in fact they are punished by that very blindness, and suffer incomparably worse things than they inflict upon others. So I resolve to remove where such manners were not to prevail."\* Jacobus a Vitriacus, in his *Historia Occidentale*, gives a dark, but no doubt exaggerated picture, of the disputes and jealousies among the scholars of different nations in the university of Paris. The French were styled proud and effeminate, the Teutonic nations furious, the English were taxed with being drinkers: though it is to be remarked, that Fuller speaks of drinking and swearing among the lower classes as having begun to grow frequent in his own time, subsequent to the pseudo-reformation,† when Milton, fallen on evil days, had to beseech his Muse to drive far off the barbarous dissonance of Bacchus and his revellers;‡ to which epoch also must be traced the testimony of Poggio, where, in a letter to Nicholas Niccoli, he says, that the English were more occupied with eating and drinking than with letters. The Normans were styled vain-glorious, the Burgundians senseless and gross, the Britons light and inconstant, to whom the death of Arthur used frequently to be objected, the Lombards were said to be avaricious, the Romans seditious, the Sicilians cruel and tyrannic, the Flemings prodigal and gluttonous. One can detect, however, in this the fertile invention of a satirist, magnifying the peculiarity of national character; neither is it fair to confound the scholars who were receiving their education at the university, with those external pensioners who used to be called Martinets, because not belonging to any college, they flew like swallows from one to another, and staid only at that which suited them the best. After all, though the innocence of monastic students might fear the dissipation of a university, it is probable that the influence of the general manners which they beheld there would be felt in later ages as the inspirations of a better world. The zeal for learning, which imparted somewhat of a wandering and Homeric character to the life of scholars as well as professors, was not unaccompanied with a tender piety. Andrieu du Hecquet speaks of his studies at Paris, at Cologne, and at Louvaine, in these terms,—

"Lettres j'apprins (car homme indocte est vain)  
En toi Paris, en Coulogne et Louvain,  
Où le tout soit à la gloire de Christ,  
Le cuer, le corps, toute l'ame et l'esprit."||

These studies were associated with many sweet recollections of a friendship that was almost angelical, where names were not even mutually known, but only countenances, and what was common between all, the love of learning and the reverence for holy Church; for these friends saw each other only in the schools and before the divine altars. In some places, indeed, a less secluded discipline was established in union with certain forms of a poetic life, as in the universities of Spain, where the students are allowed to go into society, or to perform a serenade, to as late an hour as nine in the evening on Sundays and the fifth feria, but at other times a student is not allowed to appear in public with

\* Confess. lib. v.

† Fuller's Thoughts, 53.

‡ vii.

|| Gouget, Biblioth. Française, tom. xii.



his guitar, although it is an instrument almost inseparable from him. The scholars in the colleges of Paris used to visit Gentilly and two other villages in their customary walks, which used to be called *Ire ad Campos*.<sup>\*</sup> The leave to play or for the promenade, were themes which the old poets of France did not disdain to choose. One of our ancient writer says, "Before this time there was an old custome for the scholars of London to meet at the priory of St. Bartholomew, to dispute in logic and grammar, upon a bank under a tree." A joyful festival was that of St. Catharine to the students of Padua; it was denominated the Feast of Hope. Sometimes the mirth of public rejoicings was allowed to penetrate within universities. A contemporary writer relates that, during those which took place after the battle of Bouvines, in the reign of Philip Augustus, the scholars of the university of Paris, not content with the joy of one day, protracted their triumph during seven days, dancing and singing continually. Aristotle was silent all that time; Plato proposed no questions; all books were laid aside; but the *κίριμος*, which Pindar condescends to notice as the contumacious diversion of boys, throwing all things into confusion, was not required for their enjoyment; neither did their discipline permit the rougher exercises of boxing and the pancration to form athletic champions, which were both prohibited by the Spartan discipline; and yet Aristotle says, that even that tended to make youth too brutal, *βιηλδέεις*.<sup>†</sup> Tiberius, to render his son Drusus odious for the character of cruelty, permitted him to be present at the combat of gladiators.<sup>‡</sup> In reading Mabillon's account of the foundation of the Benedictine public schools in Germany, we might imagine that it was a passage from the writings of Plato, to explain the ideal end of a perfect education; for he says that these schools were instituted, in which an uncultivated and savage race by degrees might be taught to lay aside their hard rough manners, and being exercised in a mild and holy discipline, might be rendered gentle and humane.¶ The innocent and simple recreations of a country life belonged to students even while attending the monastic schools, where they would have felt less fear than Ulysses at the prospect of spending a night upon a lake or river, lest they should suffer from the cold air which springs up before the dawn.§ For swimming there was even provision made where rivers were not near. With the ancients, baths for swimming were provided with porticoes, gardens, libraries, and places where philosophers might discourse and poets recite their verses. Agrippa was the first to establish one of these baths at Rome. Here were places for all exercises of the body and amusement of the mind. The famous Ulpian Library was in the baths of Diocletian. In the middle ages the predominance of the swimmer's sport may be learned from those paintings in the palace of 'Tau at Mantua, which represent the diversions of the different seasons. Places for swimming were provided by Charlemagne in the neighbourhood of his schools, and we discover frequently in the monastic chronicles allusion to the healthful and manly recreations which were permitted to their scholars. But whatever license in this respect might prevail in universities, learning continued to be grave, and

\* Lebeuf, x. 13.

† Polit. viii. 3.

‡ Tacit. Ann. 1.

¶ Præfat. in iii. Sæcul. Benedict. § 4.

§ Od. v. 469.

solid, and religious, and had not then yielded place to the modern philosophic system of education, in which students are chiefly employed in constant little manipulations, and are taught, like the boy in Goetz Von Berlichingen, not to know their own father from their learning, or rather, as Bonald says, because they pin butterflies, glue plants, or arrange little morsels of mineral substances: natural philosophy was not an essential part of studies, but the primary and indispensable object was to train the young to love what ought to be loved, and to hate what ought to be hated, and according to Plato, that is the true end of all education.\*

The studies of seculars in the courts of nobility were such as were useful as well as interesting to youth; for the scholastic doctors do not seem to have been in ignorance of what was the proper learning for noblemen. The book of instruction entitled *L'Esperon de Discipline*, by Antoine du Saix, which was composed for Charles, Duke of Savoy, contains a view of all virtues and vices, and an abridgment of all branches of knowledge, and of every thing that belongs to the education of youth, both relating to the mind and body. The Abbé Gouget admits that the author shows a profound knowledge of human nature, and that his idea of education was admirable.† For the clergy and for the priests of letters, the universities provided, no doubt, higher studies. The chairs of theology, founded in the Sorbonne, were seven in number, consisting of that of reader, that of contemplative theology, that of positive theology, that of the interpretation of the holy Scriptures, that of casuistry, that of controversial divinity, and the seventh was consecrated to the interpretation of the Hebrew text of Scripture. Who can doubt but that in these schools Raphael would have found subjects more adapted to his genius than that which was furnished to him by the school of Athens, which he revived in his immortal painting on the walls of the Vatican, when one observes the success which crowned his sublime enterprise to represent the dispute on the mystery of the blessed sacrament? And remark too what a contrast would be found if one were to assist with the eyes of an artist or of a poet at the polemical discussions which have succeeded in some places to the scholastic disputations of the ages of faith! But give the reins to imagination, and try to conceive a scene of the highest intellectual and even poetic interest: your mind's creation will fall short of the reality which Catholic schools have witnessed! In the year 1304, a crowd of clerks, monks, and laymen, were assembled in the great hall of the university of Paris to hear a thesis which was to be sustained *de quolibet*. There were fourteen scholastic champions, and it was a young stranger of lofty and thoughtful countenance who was to sustain their attack. This stranger was Dante, who, being then in exile, had travelled into France for his instruction.

“Theologus Dantes, nullius dogmatis expertus,”

was the verse first inscribed at Ravenna upon his tomb.

But it is time to break off, though one would stand charmed and for ever unwearied in the holy and peaceful retreats of Catholic learning. Let us still speak of them as we move away. Pliny, in setting forth the praise of Isacus the rhetorician, contrasts the school with the forum,

\* De Legibus, liv. ii.

† Tom. xi. 376.

and says he has passed his sixtieth year, and still he is only a scholastic,—than which kind of men there is nothing simpler, or purer, or better. The forum inspires the best men with some degree of malice: the school being concerned with fictitious causes, is a peaceful and innocent thing, neither is it less happy, especially to old men; for what can be happier in old age than that which is most sweet in youth?\*" *Nam quid in senectute felicius quam quod dulcissimum est in juvena?*" The Catholic schools provided that safety for the philosophic nature which was sought for with such anxiety by Plato, though he seems to have considered its attainment as impracticable. "Where can we find safety for it?" he asks, "and where are there means existing to enable it to arrive at its end? We have seen that to such a nature belong, of necessity, the talent of learning with ease, and memory, and courage, and magnanimity: therefore, from early youth, such a person will be first among all *πρῶτος ἔσται ἐν ἀπασι*, especially if he should have, in addition, a body corresponding to these dispositions of soul; therefore I think that his relations and fellow-citizens will desire to have him in their interests when he grows up; they will consequently fawn upon him and give him many salutations, flattering his future power. Living, then, surrounded by them, what will such a man do? particularly if he be a native of a great city, and rich, and noble of race, and besides, handsome and tall? Will he not be filled with a hope which nothing can subdue, thinking himself competent to conduct the affairs of both Greeks and Barbarians? Will he not adopt a high pompous manner, full of specious and dramatic action, being swollen with vain and senseless pride?"†

Now in these Catholic schools, which we may well leave with regret, that philosophic nature was sanctified and preserved; there were no flatterers, and no temptations opposed to the manners of an innocent angelic life: there was not the knowledge of evil. The cares of the worldly race were so excluded, that it became scholars' fashion to take no trouble about the things of life, as if all necessities would wait upon us at the instant we want them. Pride was kept down, for there were no inquiries there instituted as to nobility of birth or prospects of future power. There was not found the proud disdain or supercilious neglect of those, who with themselves at war, forget the shows of love to other men. Courtesy to strangers was expressly required as a criterion of proficiency. The meek were there the favourites, and the wisest and the greatest were the most humble. In a word, every thing estimable and precious was comprised within the school. There were devout exercises, the resources of piety, the delights of music, the solemn choir, the poetry of the groves and streams, the communications of study, the exhilaration of play, the sanctifying influence of example, the sweets of friendship, of which the poet is obliged to return here for the purest example,—

———— "O! and is all forgot?  
All school-days' friendship, childhood, innocence?"

A brief review of the character of friendship during the ages of faith, will form the conclusion of this third Book.

\* Epist. lib. ii. 3.

† Plat. de Repub. lib. vi.



## CHAPTER VII.

FRIENDSHIP, that sweet engaging word, which awakens so many pure affections, so many grateful recollections, that word so familiar to the tongue of youth, which was shouted in play, and looked in study, and whispered every morning at the altar of God; friendship, that musical, poetic, religious word, to exhilarate the joyful, to encourage the diligent, to console the wretched, is associated most intimately with the manners of the ages of faith, with the days of scholastic education, and with every conception that we can form of the present and eternal beatitude of the meek. It is not possible, says an ancient sage, either that a wicked man should be a friend to a wicked man, or that a good man should not be a friend to a good man: \* profound and piercing words, that may lead many to meditate on the vanity of their own hopes, and not a few perchance to see evidence that their own piety, notwithstanding the zeal which seems to animate them for God's honour, is hypocritical and false. Cardan inserts it among his maxims of civil prudence that there can be no such thing as friendship, excepting between the wise, who may be called philosophers.† Understanding, he says, that our religion is the only true philosophy, for that not even conformity of studies, of literary or scientific principles can yield it, is shown by Aristotle, who observes, that the common bonds which give rise to friendship, do not consist in thinking alike with respect to the heavenly bodies, for there is no ground of love in unanimity on such matters; but that it must be of a more general description, and therefore goodness is requisite, for it is not possible, he adds, that evil men should think alike excepting within very confined limits.‡ Friendship is clearly a treasure unattainable to the proud, who can endure nothing that is contrary to their own caprice and customs; unattainable to scorners, who despise the things which are excellent, because the good will fly from such men; unattainable to the vain and dissipated, who can only receive words for words, tokens of an acquaintance, which is itself an unhappiness; unattainable to all men whose manners are not formed to meekness, unless, indeed, we dignify with the name of friendship such a passion as that of the barbarous Huns, who are described as so capricious and cholerick, that they would separate from their companions without any cause of anger, and return to them without any reason for reconciliation in one and the same day; for the refinement of more civilized society cannot of itself present any higher claims to it, since that only tends to destroy the simplicity and truth which the ancients, as John of Salisbury remarks,|| deemed so essential to friendship, that they used always to represent the Graces naked. That only tends to make men hold their friends, as Plautus says, enclosed within their teeth, having not confidence enough even to pronounce their name;§ that only tends to make them suspect each other, though they speak together as if friends; through its influence

\* Plato, Phædrus.

† Prudent. Civ. cap. vi.

‡ Ethic. lib. ix. 6.

|| De Nugis Curial. iii. 7.

§ Plautus Trinummus iv. 2

they are taught to receive the words of those who perhaps truly love them, as those of an enemy, and are thus deceived by their own dread of deception. What is this, cries St. Odo in his collations, but the wretchedness of human life? \* The truth is, and to express it in the words of St. Augustin, men can never love one another with true love unless they love God. But he who loves God will love his neighbour as himself. † Hence the friendship of the meek is immutable. "I have read in your letters," says Petrus Cellensis, writing to Bernerdo, "that you have lost old friends without having found new. But true friendship in virgin purity and constancy of fervour can never be adulterated or cooled. It never dies, but with a daily renovation, like the sun, is always in vigour. Therefore if you ever had friends you have them still, not old, which denoted what was imperfect, but renewed, which is the work of God." ‡ The Catholic religion in many ways conduced to the formation as well as to the solidity of friendship; the multiplication of those innocent and useful relations which sweeten and adorn the life of men followed of necessity from that principle of association which we have seen emanated from the church, and gave a new form to society. In all common pursuits *ἐν ἀπόσει κοινωνίᾳ*, there is friendship, says Aristotle. In all companionship there is love. In sailing together, or labouring together, or reading together, and similarly in all other common sufferings or performing, in proportion as there is fellowship there is friendship. § Now we have already seen how the Catholic religion extended these common bonds, and associated men together in a thousand forms of connection, who otherwise would have been isolated and separate, and therefore it furnished a soil most favourable to this sweetest flower of friendship. Another way in which the religion of the meek promoted its growth, consisted in its removing the artificial barriers into which pride divides the world. "By the law of friendship," says the blessed Cæled, abbot of Rievaulx, "the superior is on a level with the inferior, for it frequently happens that some of an inferior rank, or order, or science, are taken into friendship by others of more pre-eminence, who must then despise and esteem as nothing all the things which are not of nature; they must have constant regard to the beauty of friendship, which is not adorned by silks or gems, nor dilated by possessions, nor flattered by delights, nor exalted by honours and dignities; and thus recurring to the principle of its origin, they must acutely attend to the equality which nature gave, and not to the appendages which cupidity has superinduced. Therefore, in friendship, which is the best gift both of nature and of grace, the sublime descend, the humble ascend, the rich want, the poor are enriched, so that each communicating his condition to the other, the equality spoken of is maintained. § Friendship belonged to the meek because they were weaned from the love of riches, for as Ariosto sings,

In poor abode, mid paltry walls and bare,  
Amid discomforts and calamities,

\* S. Odonis Collation. lib. i. Bibliothec. Cluniac.

† Petri Abb. Cellensis Epist. lib. ix. 2.

§ De Spirit. Amicitia, lib. iii.

† Tractat. 87 in Joan.

§ Ethic. lib. viii. c. 9.

Often in friendship hearts united are,  
 Better than under roof of lordly guise,  
 Or in some royal court, beset with snare,  
 Mid envious wealth, and ease, and luxuries;  
 Where charity is spent on every side,  
 Nor friendship unless counterfeit is spied.\*

Besides this, meekness of itself fitted men for friendship. Cardan says, that the conversation of any common unlearned person from among the people, is more agreeable than that of a sophistical and learned man, because there is nothing so offensive as the pride and affectation of the wisdom of the world; but as the Catholic religion extirpated the roots of pedantry and arrogance, and made men, however learned or accomplished, speak and comport themselves like others, according to the natural sweetness of humanity, which is recognised equally in all classes, it made them also estimable, and entitled to be the objects of friendship. In fact, as the Greek poet says of generosity, the Catholic religion made men young again.† Catholic conversation is cheerful and popular, as it were youthful; that of the modern schools is gloomy, suspicious, pedantic, and senile. In the latter, we find a false and pretentious urbanity, refined and pompous, but ill concealing insensibility and egotism; in the former a simplicity which perhaps at first offends, but by degrees, a disposition also along with it of a subdued and smiling tone, which soothes, charms, and ravishes by its goodness. And sooth we shall the more appreciate this privilege of meekness conducing to friendship by considering what is the wretchedness of those who forfeit it; for those learned men who otherwise have the least chance of securing a friend, are precisely those to whom friendship is most necessary. Cicero remarks this in speaking of Dionysius, for he says, "What a misery must it have been to such a man to want friends and familiar conversation, one who like him was learned from a boy and skilled in ingenious arts."‡ Moreover, by inducing habits of meditation and retirement, and a temper of mind essentially opposed to the spirit of Thersites, a temper devout and joyous, though softened and subdued like the bright tints in a landscape by a certain tone of sweet melancholy, that religion assisted and regulated the development of those qualities which men of acute philosophic observation like Cardan have found to be conducive to friendship; for he says, that in choosing friends, those persons ought to be selected who are by nature constant and melancholy, and who are not easily withdrawn from affections, whom we find from boyhood to have been always content with one or two companions, with whom they assiduously conversed.¶ He might have added too, that men who reject mysteries are not made for friendship, which Hesiod shows in saying that night was its mother. Nor is this all, for who does not perceive how greatly friendship was promoted and secured when religion taught the meek, as the blessed Francis said, to love their brother when they are far from him in the same manner as when they are with him, and never to say any thing in his absence which they could not say with charity to his face?§ When it taught them to place in their daily memento those

\* Canto xliv. Rose's transl.

† Eurip. Heraclid. 693.

‡ Tuscul v. 22.

¶ Prudent. Civilis, cap. xli.

§ S. Francisci Opuscul. De la Bigne Bib. Patrum iv.



friends who had departed to the other world, that by prayers of faith their bliss might be advanced, or to draw consolation from that conviction of their fecility at which the remembrance of their manners enabled them to arrive? Where the principles of the Catholic religion did not exist, the most acute and reflecting men in surveying the disorders which sin and death have entailed upon humanity, have been obliged to speak of friendship in terms that are calculated to wound and shock the heart which feels that it is formed for the sweets of infinite and eternal love. They speak of it as a dangerous thing, to which reason must place limits, lest it should prove a source of bitterness when the hour of separation arrives, and they even teach that the heart must never venture to trust itself to perfect friendship. "Length of years hath taught me many things," says the poet, "for mortals should cherish only a moderate friendship for one another, and not an affection from the deepest marrow of the soul;

*καὶ μὴ πρὸς ἀπρον μυελὸν ψυχᾶς*

but only a love which can be easily loosened without tearing and overpowering the soul with affliction, for an extreme friendship is too great a weight; and nothing is good when it exceeds the bounds of moderation."\* What a contrast was here to the sentiments of the meek who love their friends in God; who by the mystic privileges accorded from the Mount are enabled to inherit friendship, that sweetest plant of earth, if it be not rather of heaven, in all its strength and perfection, in all its beauteous and everlasting bloom! How strange sound to them the words separation and dissevering of the soul as connected with the death of friends! What mortal ever loved with more profound and intense affection than the tender Augustine, and yet he commits his sainted mother to the grave, that mother who had wept so many years for him, who was doubly his mother, having brought him forth both to the world and to heaven, reconciling him to Jesus Christ, and he feels that in regard to her he has henceforth only a higher duty to fulfil. A prudent companion is in no respect as Homer says inferior to a brother.† Such a friend did he see quietly inurned, not with the sentiments of uninstructed humanity giving vent to sorrow in the bitter cry of desolation, but with those of the renovated race in the sweet ecstasy of quiet thought meditating on everlasting gladness. "Nebrides is living in the bosom of Abraham. Yes, whatever may be intended by that bosom of Abraham, Nebrides, my dear friend, is there; for where else could be a soul so beautiful and so Christian? He is in that place of glory and repose about which he has so often questioned me. His ear is no longer attached to my lips, but his lips are attached to that source of living water which is nothing else but thee, O my God! *ibi Nebridius meus vivit, et bibit quantum potest sapientiam pro aviditate suâ sine fine felix.*" What an extension of the sweets of friendship followed from the assurance that there is communion between the living and the dead, that there were those who already arrived at expiatory or even at supremely blessed shore might be addressing us in such words as Dante heard from the spirit of Casella.

\* Eurip. Hippolyt. 253.

† Od. viii. 585.

——— Thee as in my mortal frame  
I lov'd, so loos'd from it I love thee still.\*

William of Malmesbury relates a wondrous example, which would have greatly moved the stoics, of the manifestation of this ghostly friendship made after the death of the body. Robert of Lotharingia, he says, was the intimate friend of the most holy Wlstan, Bishop of Worcester. It happened that when Wlstan was sick at Worcester, and near his blessed end, Robert was at court employed about the king's affairs, when lo! Wlstan appeared to him in a vision saying, "If you wish to behold me alive hasten to Worcester." Moved by this vision, Robert obtained leave from the king to depart immediately, and he never rested night or day till he reached that city; for he feared greatly lest he should not arrive in time to find him alive, for the journey was very long. However, on arriving at the last stage, he was overcome with sleep, and Wlstan appeared to him again, saying, "You have done all that pious love demanded, but you are disappointed in your hopes, for I have departed. But dear companion, provide for your own safety, because you will not remain long after me; and to convince you that you are not deceived by a fantastic vision, this shall be a sign to you. To-morrow, after you have committed my body to the earth, a gift will be presented to you in my name." Robert awoke and proceeded on his way. On arriving at Worcester, he found the procession already marshalled to escort the saint's body to the tomb; he joined it, and then condoled with the monks of whose funeral meats he partook in silence. Already mounted on his horse, he was taking leave of the holy brethren, when lo! the prior stepped forward from the throng, and kneeling down reverently presented him a gift, saying, "My lord, accept I pray you this cap of your ancient friend made of lambskin, which he was accustomed to wear when he rode on horseback, and it will bear witness to your long friendship with our holy lord." Hearing these words and recognising the gift, the other turned pale, and a cold shuddering ran through his bones; he dismounted and waved to his attendants in sign that he suspended his departure: demanding an audience of the monks, they assembled with looks of consternation and amaze, in the chapter-house, where with tears he related the circumstances of his vision, and then having commended himself heartily to the prayers of all their society, he resumed his state and departed. It was in the middle of January when Wlstan died, and Robert did not survive the succeeding June.† Of the friendship which was found to prevail during the middle ages, even in the scenes of secular dissipation, history and also the fables of chivalry, which are true representations of real manners, furnish many engaging and memorable examples. Witness the deliverance of Bouteiller and Dufresnoy, from the hands of Louis of Spain, by Sir Walter Mauny and his troop of heroic companions, one of the most noble and affecting adventures of which friendship, honour and chivalry can boast. The old writer of the life of Bayart says, that the Duke of Nemours had so won the hearts of his companions, that they would all have died for him; and he bears the same testimony to the Seigneur de Molart, of whom he says, "*tous ses gens se feussent faits mourir pour luy*," and

\* Purg. ii.  
Vol. II.—19

† Will. Malmesbur. de gestis Pontif. Anglicorum. lib. iv.  
N

of Bayart himself, he affirms that while lieutenant of the king in Dauphiny, he so gained the affections of both nobles and peasants, that they would all have died for him. Indeed, the annals of the middle ages abound with portraits of the purest and noblest friendship, and even the *deguzevas* of the Greeks, invested too with an interest that the muse of Euripides had never conceived, was a character familiar to them. The friendship of Bassanio and Anthonio, which in our age would be deemed unreasonable, and opposed to the decrees of domestic philosophy, was drawn by Shakspeare from the life as seen in the middle ages. We have been so imbued in other works with illustrations of this theme, that I shall be content at present with offering the instance of the friendship which is ascribed in the history of Gyron le Courtoys to Hector le Brun and Abdalon le Beau, of whom we read, “en telle maniere lung ayma lautre par telle guise et par telle amour comme se ils eussent este freres charnels. Ne oncques puis pour adventure quilz trouvassent discorde ne peut venir entre deux, ne lung neut envie de l'autre en nulle maniere. Oncques ne se departerent lung de lautre, mais tousjours chevaucherent ensemble en se entre aymant. De si grant amour que lung ne pavoit vivre sans lautre.”\* The confidence which men reposed in their friends is nobly expressed in the same history, where Gyron replies through the iron bars of his prison to one who spoke of his calamity. “My friends will hear of my adventure. Il ny a en ceste part montaigne qui puisse tenir mes amys quilz ne viennent jusques a moy par fine force.”† The literature which corresponds with these compositions, and which has superseded them in the courts of nobility, may pretend to greater refinement of language, and claim a place in a more philosophic order of study, but assuredly it does not furnish examples in equal abundance of the same virtue to exalt and adorn the human character: but I hasten to consider the friendship which belonged more especially to the meek during these ages, and which is sought for, not so much in fables of chivalry, though they are not without some sweet remembrance of it, as in saintly histories, and in the sentiments which have been delivered by the wise and holy. Doubtless if with clear view the intellect be fixed upon the ordinary proofs of friendship comprised within the world's annals, there will be ground rather for sadness than for joy, for it cannot be deceived by hearing the Capulets and Montagues speak of friendship when it must witness also their rivalries and wrath. “Whoever hates one man cannot love another truly and spiritually, nor yet himself, nor God, since he is in mortal sin, as Denis the Carthusian says.”‡ All was false and worthless that wore the semblance of love in men that to Christ's school were dead; but after rejecting every suspicious claim we are not left unprovided with bright examples that are proof against the test possessed by saints. Celebrated was the friendship of St. Paul and St. Thecla, of St. Ambrose and St. Monica, of St. Jerome and Paulina, Eustochia, Blesile and Ruffina, of saints Marcella, Albina, Asele, and Leta, of St. Francis of Assissi and St. Clare and Jacqueline, of St. Anthony of Padua and a devout person of Limoges. At an infinite distance from every thing allied to inhumanity, from all indications of a selfish, contracted, and unfeeling nature, was the self-

\* Gyron le Courtois, f. xxxvi.

† Id. f. cccvi.

‡ De Arcta Via Sal. vi.



renouncement and mortification of the saints. They were precisely the most feeling, liberal and generous of men. We find some of them acknowledging that it was for the love of a friend, after God, that they were induced to renounce the world, following him like the companions of St. Bernard to his cloister.\* Gaudentius had been the playfellow of the young Count of Woycech, his fellow student in the cloistral school of Magdeberg, and when under the name of Adalbert he retired into the monastery of St. Alexius, on Mount Aventine, that faithful brother alone followed him, though still in the flower of youth. Ever constant to friendship, he left that peaceful retreat when the blessed man directed his steps to preach the Gospel to the heathen people of Prussia, accompanied him through all his dangers, and never left him till he had seen him receive the martyr's crown.† Passionate fervent souls, quick to conceive hopes of inexpressive joy, would you hear of a friendship suddenly formed, and yet precious as the ruddy drops that warm the feeling heart, lasting as eternity? you will find an instance in the lives of the anchorites of the desert. "Ah, Paul, why hast thou left me?" cried the holy Anthony. "Why depart without wishing me adieu! Tam tarde notus, tam cito recedis?"‡ Men of chivalrous honour, who profess to feel such admiration at the spectacle of moral greatness, would you behold constancy of love in death? Friendship was on the tongue of the martyrs in their passion. Then drawing from his finger a ring, he steeped it in his blood, and giving it to Pudens. "Receive it," said he to him, "as a pledge of our friendship, and let the blood which stains it remind you of that which I have shed this day for Jesus Christ."§ And in fact, who than sainted fathers of the holy church have ever recognised with greater clearness the value and excellence of friendship? "The consolation of this life consists in possessing a faithful friend who may rejoice with you in prosperity, condole with you in sorrow, and exhort you in persecution." It is St. Ambrose who speaks thus. Who does not know that the express rules of holy societies prescribe companionship, and point out like the ethic page the comparative helplessness and inefficiency of man in an isolated state? Priests and religious persons of different sacred orders were not to go forth alone for *Σύν τε δὴ ἐρχομένοι* men are more powerful both to think and to perform,§ a maxim which experience and the Homeric wisdom had taught to Diomedes.

— ἀλλ' εἴ τις μοι ἀνὴρ ἄμ' ἔποιτο καὶ ἄλλος  
Μᾶλλον θαλπνὴ καὶ θαρσαλύντερον ἔσται.\*

The great Homer has the wisdom and piety to make Agamemnon declare, in reference to Achilles, that a man who is loved by God is equivalent to a multitude of people.†† And religion found nothing in the sentence which was unworthy of the discipline of truth, that recognised a principle most dear to an heroic nature, that friends and companions are from God. Jacob, being asked by his brother concerning those

\* Vita V. Walæ Abb. Corbiens. iv. lib. i. 467 apud Mabillon Acta S. Ordin. Benedict. Sæcul. iv. p. i.

† Voigt. Geschichte Preussens i. b. 4. c.

‡ S. Hieronym. Vita S. Pauli Eremit.

§ Aristot. Ethic. lib. viii. 1.

|| Acta Martyr. in S. Perpetua.

\*\* Il. x. 222.

†† Il. ix. 116.

that were with him, replied "Parvuli sunt quos donavit mihi Deus servo tuo."\*

The respect which was shown to friendship, and the earnestness with which its demands were urged, form a characteristic of the ages of faith, from which these latter ages of the world have sadly declined. Cicero says that friendship ought to be preferred to every thing excepting virtue, but many at present seem to esteem it a mark of superior ability and of honourable diligence, nay even of a more manly and philosophic nature to prefer the most trifling object of domestic or professional care to its advances, however earnest, as if, forsooth, it were evidence of wisdom and perfectness of life to be insensible. We find no trace of this severity, which in truth, however men may talk of philosophic discipline, savours more of the counting-house than of the cloister, in the manners of the middle ages. Their spirit was expressed by Bayart, when he said to his noble hostess at Brescia, "*Toute ma vie ay plus aymé beaucoup les gens que les escus.*"† It seems also as if men were loved more than books, more than the dearest and most familiar pursuits, for humanity was always uppermost in the affections of those who held that only the love of Jesus Christ is durable.‡ Petrarch, describing his reception in the Carthusian monastery of Montrieu, says in his letter to those holy men, "the activity, the ardour with which you rendered me all sorts of services, the agreeable conversation I had with you in general and in particular, made me fear I should interrupt the course of your devout exercises." When St. Adalhard, abbot of Corby, was recalled from exile and restored to honour by the emperor Lewis, who had been persuaded by his enemies to banish him to the island of Heri off the coast of Aquitaine, on the day of his departure all the brethren of the abbey, in which he had spent an angelic life in close confinement for the space of seven years, were moved to tears at losing him, though they could not but rejoice that he was to be restored to his own. Ragnardus, who was afterwards abbot, being of a fervent spirit, was above all overwhelmed with affliction. So that when the holy servant of God was about to depart, and all the brethren were kissing his feet and his footsteps, watering them with their tears and wishing him farewell, he alone remained shut up in his cell, in order that he might not see the man depart who was dearer to him than his own life; but when the other had long inquired for him, he was at length discovered in the obscurity weeping and lamenting: being called to come forth and wish the old man farewell, he entreated the messenger to leave him to weep alone. The holy man, on hearing this, left the ship, on which he was already embarked, and returned, that he might not depart without a kiss from that brother whom he knew was holy. So he found him weeping, and they embraced and then separated. The brethren then accompanied him back to the ship. The sails were soon raised, and as long as she remained visible they stood on the shore looking after him; for the spirit of love constrained them and they could not resist it.¶ The greatest saints, refreshed with heavenly visions, did not pretend that the being deprived of friends and the being left solitary on earth made no sorrowful impres-

\* Gen. xxxiii.

† Chap. li.

‡ De Avilla, Epist. Spirit. x.

¶ Vita Adalhardi, Mabil. Acta S. Ordinis. Bened. Sæcul. iv. § 1.

sion upon their souls. "What is the reason, my brother," writes St. Hilda to one of her correspondents, "that you have been so long absent, and that you delay to come to me? Why do you not consider that I am alone in this land, that no other brother visits me; that not any one of my relations comes to me? And if you hold back because hitherto I have been prevented from executing what you desired, you ought, on the ground of charity and relationship to forget this, and without requiring any persuasion to change your mind. O my brother, my dear brother, how can you afflict the mind of my littleness with constant sorrow, with weeping and sadness day and night? Do you not know for a certainty, that of all living persons I prefer no one to your love? Behold, I cannot explain all things to you by letters. Now I am assured that you feel no concern about poor and humble me."\* Among the epistles of St. Boniface, there is one addressed to Baldhard, in which is an affecting complaint: "the presents which were brought to me by your faithful messenger Aldræd I have embraced with fervent charity; and now, by God's assistance, I would fulfil all that you require of me, if it might be your pleasure to come to me; for I cannot in any manner stop a fountain of tears when I see and hear of others who are going to their friends. Then I recollect how I was forsaken by my parents in my youth, and how I have remained here alone, and yet I was not forsaken by God, but I return thanks to God for his immense goodness in preserving me. And now, my brother, I ask and implore you to take away sadness from my soul, because this greatly injures me. For I say although it were to be but for the space of one day, and that then you would depart by the will of God, yet that would be sufficient to make this sorrow pass from my mind and this sadness from my heart; but if it should displease you to grant my petition, I call God to witness that it is not I who have forgotten our love."† St. Boniface writes many letters in the same spirit, and similar may be found in the correspondence of St. Anselm. Mark how deeply these men felt any omission in exchange of letters. Petrus Cellensis writes as follows, to remonstrate with his friend for not having written to him: "Charity, which is patient, strange to say, only drives me to impatience. How is this? Have you no such things as charts, or is your love shortened? What is the cause of such a long silence? Is there a failing of hearts as well as bread in Britain? Of the one indeed I had heard, but I never believed that the other would succeed it. A bishop may be excused, on account of his incessant labours and the solicitude for all the churches, and his care of the afflicted and his reconciliations of enemies, but what forbids a clerk to write letters to his friend? It remains to condemn your negligence. Quia igitur oleum non misistis, aculeum sumitis."‡ And again to another friend he writes, "Am I to believe you a different man? or that I am changed? Friendship cannot dissemble, cannot flatter. O my dearest friend, am I to ascribe it to oblivion or to negligence that you have abstained so long from coming to salute your friend? Is it that you are occupied? But it is not gracious to be always occupied."§ On the other hand, the earnest affectionate excuses made by monks for not hav-

\* S. Bonif. Mart. et Archiep. Epist. lvi.

† Petri Cellensis, lib. i. Epist. xv.

‡ Id. Epist. lxiv.

§ Id. Liv. i. Epist. xix.



ing written answers to the letters addressed to them by friends in distant monasteries, leave nothing incomplete in this contrast to the cold formality and proud indifference of later manners. It is not, however, to be inferred from these passages that the sincere piety and fervent spirituality of the ages of faith would have countenanced the selfish and unreasonable exaction of those triflers who imagine that their conversation ought to be always of paramount interest, so that every occupation, however holy and important, should give place to it. St. Peter, the venerable abbot of Cluny, wrote to St. Bernard, testifying how he loved and revered him, though he had never been in his presence, and saying how he had long desired to converse with him, but that his many employments and sufferings had prevented him,\* and in a letter to the abbot Suger he laments, in most feeling terms, that while he is often obliged to see persons whom he has no desire to see, and to be engaged with secular applicants whom he would rather fly from, he can scarcely ever behold his beloved friend the abbot of St. Denis, Suger, who has never been at Cluny but once.† Holy priests in those ages, dearly as they prized friendship, and profoundly as they admired genius and sanctity, could not sometimes find leisure for the company of a Suger or a St. Bernard, and every door-knocking trifler in our times would call in question the charity of learned and laborious men, if they were not always prompt to listen to them. It is not the justice of such complaints that should be advocated, but there does seem occasion to look back with complacency to the manners of those ages which were characterized by the fervour as well as by the prudent and reasonable regulation of friendship. Friends are great thieves of time, but as Petrarch says, no time ought to seem less stolen, less squandered than that which, after God, is expended upon friends.‡ It is not every vile circumstance or interest of money that should take precedence of them. Tyndarus enabled his poor fellow captive, whom he had known a boy when himself a boy, and whom he had ever loved from that time, to escape, and when his furious master demanded of him where was his fidelity, he quietly and wittily replied, "What, do you require that I, who have been your slave since one day and night, should be more attentive to your interests than to his with whom I have passed my life from boyhood?"§ But most men are now the captives of masters who would answer instantly that they do require them to show that preference, and who would find no great difficulty in making themselves obeyed, and men, whose employments are all about money or the objects of political ambition, receive their inexperienced friend with such looks as if they presumed that he must have read the inscription of the elder Aldus over their door. But how engaging, how holy are the expressions of affection which we meet with in the writings of the ages of faith! Witness the following letter, addressed to Lullus the bishop: "I entreat you, O beloved brother, forget not, but always cherish in memory that ancient friendship which we entertained for each other when living in the city of Maldubia, where the abbot Eaba nourished us in amiable charity, when he used to call you by the name of

\* S. Petri Ven. Epist. lib. i. 28.

† Petrarch. Epist. ad Vir. illust.

‡ Epist. lib. iv. 15.

§ Plautus Capteivei, iii. 4.

Irtel, by which now the abbot Hereca salutes you in holy salutation, as well as the whole congregation which dwells in your monastery. He that shall persevere in peace unto the end, the same shall be saved. Farewell then my beloved, and for ever fare thee well. My beloved, chosen of God, because charity has no price. This is the sign of the abbot Hereca.\* That disposition to make little presents, which is found so prevalent in Spain and Italy, has come down from the primitive ages of Christianity, when the pagans used to say, See how they love one another. In the latter country I seldom departed from a monastery or from a casual visit to a holy man, without some book or devout print, which was forced into my hands. You cannot open any volume of correspondence which dates from the ages of faith, without finding some allusion to the interchange of modest gifts, as tokens, not of vanity but of love. Ælred, abbot of Riveaux in Yorkshire in the twelfth century, has left a beautiful book on spiritual friendship, to show the vanity of all friendship which is not spiritual, and sanctified by a devout reference to the eternal love of Christ. "Some men," he says, "are irrationally moved and inclined in mind towards a person by discovering his vices. For many can draw the minds of others to themselves, on account of a vain philosophy or some foolish boldness in military affairs; and what is worse still, many because they are prodigal, luxurious, betrayers of modesty, favourers and followers of base men or vainly fond of silly spectacles, entice others to be inclined towards them."† To these allude the words of St. Augustine, "Si male amaveris tunc odisti, si bene oderis tunc amasti." Here occurs a reflection on the vanity of a friendship which is not according to God, in which the maxims of a heartless and selfish philosophy under the name of liberality, tend constantly to engage men. Even a heathen had the piety to say, You are my friend, but I cannot think with you, or wink at your error.

Συσσώφρονεῖν γὰρ οὐχὶ συννοσθεῖν ἔφθ.

St. Bernard said in his letter to Master Guido de Castello, the disciple of Peter Abailard, "I should do you an injury if I were to suppose that you so loved any man as to love his errors with himself. Whoever thus loves any one does not know yet how he ought to love. Such love is earthly, animal, diabolic, equally hurtful to the person loving and to him who is loved."‡ This wisdom passed even to the friendships of chivalry in the middle ages. Of Bayart the old writer of his life says, "oneques ne fut veu qu'il ait voulu soustenir le plus grant amy qu'il eust au monde contre la raison."§ But to return to the treatise of our Ælred. "You say," he continues, "what greater peace than to love and to be loved? If indeed in God and for God, I do not deny this; nay, I approve of it: but if according to the flesh or the world, see what envyings, what suspicions, what flames of an ardent spirit exclude rest of mind. And if none of these should occur, death, which all must endure, destroys this unity, bearing grief to the survivor and punishment to him who passes."§ "While I was still a boy in the school,

\* S. Bonif. Epist. lxxxviii.

† Id. iii. 12.

‡ Epist. excii.

§ P. 597.

§ Id. Speculum Charitatis, lib. i. cap. 25.

and delighted with the society of my companions, my whole mind gave itself to affection and devoted itself to love. So that I thought there was nothing sweeter or more useful than to be loved and to love. So fluctuating between diverse loves and friendships, my mind was borne hither and thither, and not knowing the law of true friendship, was often deceived by its similitude. At length there came into my hands the book of Tully de Amicitia, and I congratulated myself on having found a certain formula of friendship. I was delighted with the gravity of the sentences, and with the sweetness of the style; but afterwards, when it pleased my good Lord to correct the devious, raise the fallen, and cleanse the leper, renouncing worldly hope, I entered the monastery, and devoted myself to the study of the holy scriptures, and in a short time I found this so sweet, that all worldly science became, in my eyes, comparatively vile. Then when that book, *De Amicitia*, came back to my mind, I wondered why it did not any longer give me the same pleasure as before, for now nothing could excite the whole of my affections which was not seasoned with the salt of the holy scriptures. Wishing then to strengthen these remarks on friendship by the authority of scripture, and to spiritualize them, I undertook to compose this little work on spiritual friendship;" and where he represents his pupil alluding to the book of Cicero, he repeats this testimony in reply: "I am not unacquainted with that book, which used at one time to delight me, but from the days that I became sensible of the sweetness of the holy scriptures, and that the mellifluous name of Christ claimed all my affection, nothing that I ever read or hear seems sweet or lucid to me, however subtilly arranged, which has not the salt of the heavenly letters, and the seasoning of that sweetest name."\*

We must not, however, suppose from the gravity of these sentences, that the joys of friendship were included among those things which became to him weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable. Hear how he speaks of the society of Rievaulx. "Three days ago, as I went round the cloisters of the monastery, when I had seated myself in the midst of a beloved crowd of brethren, I fell to admiring the leaves of each tree, the fruits and flowers, which bloomed as if in a paradise of pleasure. Finding no one in all that crowd whom I did not love, and by whom I did not believe that I was loved, I experienced such joy that it surpassed all the delights of this world. For I felt as if my spirit were transfused into all, and the affections of all infused into me, so that I might say with the prophet, 'Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum.' " Then, after alluding to two persons, who were more especially joined to him in intimate affection, his friends from early youth, who had continued with him through all the stages of his religious life, he proceeds as follows: "What then? was it not a certain portion of beatitude thus to love and to be loved? Thus to assist and to be assisted? And thus, from the sweetness of fraternal affection, to fly aloft to the more sublime splendour of divine love on the ladder of charity, at one time ascending to the embraces of Christ himself, and at another descending to rest softly on the earth, in the love of one's neighbour?"†

\* Ælred. Abb. Rievallensis de Spirit. Amicitia Prolog.

† De Spirit. Amicit. lib. iii. in Bibliothec. Patrum, tom. xxiii.



Thus did he enjoy friendship with all the sweetness of humanity and all the unction of a spiritualized and illuminated heart. "Ecce ego et tu," he writes to his young friend, "et spero quod tertius inter nos Christus sit."

But this third course has already exceeded all just proportion, and I must hastily bring it to an end. Enough has been produced to show how richly the pleasures of friendship were included in the inheritance of the meek, who in sooth could hardly have been said to possess the earth, if the grant had not comprised them. "Homer did well," says Plutarch, "in making Telemachus reckon among his calamities that he had no brother."\* And just was the remark of Pindar, that all kinds of advantage are derived from friendly men.

—*χρεῖται δὲ παντὶ  
αὐ φιλῶν ἀνδρῶν.*†

And though the Christian philosophy would contradict the poet's sentence, that honour departeth from him who is deprived of friends,‡ (for few mortal men, he himself admits, are faithful in times of misfortune, so as to be partakers of suffering; and how can the infidelity of hypocrites be charged upon their victim,) yet it would sanction the opinion that friendship supplies, to spirits perfect and already chosen, a bliss which might constrain meekness itself to cry, "Behold, the earth is mine."

Such, then, are the observations suggested by a view of history relative to the meek in ages of faith, and to their enjoyment of that possession which was promised to them from the Mount. With hearts only bent upon the attainment of heaven, the earth was in abundance given to them, while the proud and foolishly deliberate race, of which were those who cried, "What shall we do? If we let him go, all men will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation," feared to lose temporal things and thought not of eternal life, and thus, as St. Augustin remarks, lost both.¶ Mild in all the manners that secured the order and the harmony of social intercourse, imbued with the principle of obedience, meekly submissive to the Church, to the rulers of the state, to the laws which they either received or administered, meek amidst power and riches and nobility, meek in the humbler ranks of the common family, they inherited the earth and derived from it all that could sweeten or dignify the existence of men. Degree was maintained in their Christian warfare. Therefore, conformable to the wise distinction of St. Augustin, the rich were not humbled to piety, so as to exalt the poor to pride; for in no manner would it have been right that in that life, where senators were laborious, there workmen should have been idle, that rustics should have been delicate where came, abandoning their delights, those who were of the Lord's vineyard.§ Stability was infused into the political as well as into the ecclesiastical order, for the rule of truth and the knowledge of the end of good and evil, put an end for ever to the uncertainties and vicissitudes of speculation, respecting both the one and the other: it was not supposed that a society, which no heresy or impure superstition had ever

\* De Amicit. frat.

¶ Tract. 49. in Joan.

VOL. II.—20

† Nem. Od. viii.

‡ Nem. x.

§ S. August. Num. 33.

disorganized, required from age to age a succession of changes and reformations, the occasions and the plan of which were to be determined by the caprice of sophists, to whose judgment each generation was to submit, in concluding when and how it was to revolutionize the whole frame of its constitution; as if there was nothing fixed or eternal in the principles or end of a Christian government, and as if manners alone were exempt from the necessity of constant vigilance, as if they alone could never perish or require change. As in time of sterility or excess of rain, and the other evils of nature, so men were patient under the luxury or avarice of rulers; for they knew, as the wise historian of Rome observes, that there will be vices as long as there will be men, that neither are these continual, but that they are compensated by the intervention of better things.\* Delivered from the anxieties and enmities which would attend continual alterations in the form of that government, whose object, as Seneca explains, was to secure to every man leisure, not labour, recreation and not toilsome pain, the earth to them yielded its choicest treasures, both of material and intellectual good. Innumerable objects of almost infinite variety ministered to their pleasures and necessities; cities rose in the desert, and the beauty of divine temples formed a paradise of pleasure in every spot to which the providence of God might conduct their steps. Nature, sanctified by religion, and restored to harmony by faith, for them was delivered from its ancient malediction. The intellectual world was granted to them as a boundless and inalienable domain. To them poetry offered its sweetest incense, and learning gave up all its accumulated stores. Spirituality threw a resplendent light on every object around them, and developed for their advantage the riches of a mysterious and unfathomable creation. Mind and body were associated to produce the concord of an universal order, and friendship gave them a foretaste of that everlasting communion, for which they were destined in the regions of supernal joy. Blessed in the hope of heaven, blessed in the possession of the earth, these generations of the poor in spirit and of the meek, fulfilled their appointed course, and passed on from time and things finite to that destination which exceeds all human thought, and all utterance but what is merely negative, to announce with trembling awe and adoring love, what they cannot be,—eternity and God.

---

\* Tacitus, *Hist.* iv. 74.

## THE FOURTH BOOK.

## CHAPTER I.

No more discourse of earth and all its fair possessions, promised from the mountain, which heard the heavenly voice disclosing the way of happiness to men. I now must change the notes to tragic; for such are those which tell of mourners, though they were in mourning blessed. Solemn task! yet argument, not less concerned with beatitude than that which described the lives of those who secured, by meekness and poverty of spirit, both earth and heaven's eternal kingdom. Deep, mysterious theme! more than speech can tell, attractive, announced as it was in tone so soft and mild, as one might have thought never before met the ear on mortal strand, sounding as if from the voice of some angelic marshal, fanning us with swanlike wings, while the gates of lucid mansions opened to the music of this unearthly strain, which affirms that those who mourn are blessed, for that comfort shall be their's.

All generations of men have mourned; but how vain would be the search into ancient history, in hopes of discovering that they were therefore blessed! Here is however a new voice, and sweet, indeed, in mortal ears, which consoleth those who mourn with the assurance that they shall be comforted; and since this is the voice of Him, whose knowledge is the law of nature and of grace, we may be sure that henceforth the study of history will bring new results, and present a very different phenomena from any thing that philosophers had ever before observed. It seemed no less strange to affirm, that the poor in spirit and the meek were blessed; and yet, what striking illustrations and evidence of that fact have we discovered in the history of the ages of faith? Let us feel emboldened, then, by his experience, and resume our study, giving it this new direction, investigating the annals of these ages of the world in especial reference to the tenor of man's woe, whether proceeding from the incidents to which he is obnoxious by nature, or from the influence of supernatural causes, which are the consequence of the light and life of faith.

But ere we proceed it may be well to remove the objection which some might advance against our intended course in general, from supposing that it obtruded upon them melancholy themes. Such persons must be reminded, that it is not religion's voice, transmitted in the writings of the middle ages, which first makes men acquainted with mourning, and that they will not be the less constrained to remember woe by attempting to banish the principles and associations of faith. To say nothing as yet in proof that it is faith which alone affords a remedy for the wounds of life, but leaving them to think as gloomily as they will of the influence which it sheds upon history, they must, notwithstanding, admit at once that by nature, as men, independent of all tradition and revelation, they are, sooner or later, compelled, either by



the experience of present sorrows, or by the fear and anticipation of future evils, to fall into the ranks of those who mourn—or, rather, as Cicero says, of the miserable. Do what they will, depart as far as they please from the philosophy of the middle ages, there is no avoiding this. As reasonably might they hope to be dispensed from death, as to pass through life, short as it is, exempt from the experience and the thoughts of woe. If they look at the world which surrounds them, and mark the countenances that front them on every side, they will find the greatest and most heroic men, visibly written mourners in their looks, like Spencer's gentle knight, who was armed, indeed, with glorious panoply—

"But of his cheere did seme too solemne sad,"\*

Melancholy is ascribed as an heroic quality to Hercules, Lysander, Ajax, Alcæon, Bellerophon, Socrates, and Plato. There is no escaping it by taking refuge in boldness and absolute war against goodness. Cain was melancholy, as St. Augustin says;† and who is not? It is propagated from Adam.

Mourning, then, by itself, formed no distinguishing characteristic of the ages of faith—

"From time's first records the diviner's voice  
Gives the sad heart a sense of misery."‡

Æschylus delivers this testimony; and what a solemn melancholy breathes in the chorus of the *Œdipus Coloneus*, which sings the mourning of the human course! Never to have been born is best of all; but after having appeared, to descend again, as soon as possible, to the lower regions, while young, is next in degree of good.

"The happiness of man lasts not long," says Pindar.¶ Would you hear the father of heroic poetry himself announcing his own conviction in the solemn words of his ideal hero. "O, Amphinomus! truly you seem to me to be wise, being the son of so great a father, whose fame is so widely spread; and they say that you are his son, and you resemble him; therefore, to you, I say, but do you hearken and consider it in your mind, that the earth produces nothing, not one animal breathing and moving upon it, more wretched than man."§ You have here the affecting testimony of the human race to the misery of its condition, before it had beheld the light of Christ.

In whatever direction we turn through the world, we shall hear mourning's voice, whether it sound of sharp anguish, or breathe in sighs. Orosius, the historian, whom Alfred translated, and made so well known to our ancestors, diffused a tone of great melancholy over his history, which he had intended first to entitle, "*De Miseria Humanum*"—a title which, Bonarsius says, might be given to all history.\*\* Hesiod says, that a thousand woes wander amidst men, that the earth is full of evils, the sea full of them.†† Profound was the sense entertained by the ancients of the vanity of all human prosperity and joy; amidst their delights, they always felt as if, to use their own expression, there was something cruel that would strangle them—

\* Faery Quene.

§ Od. xviii. 125.

† Epist. 105.

\*\* In Præfat. ad gesta Dei per Francos.

‡ Æschyl. Agam.

¶ Pyth. Od. iii.

†† Op. et Dies.

— τρία μὲν  
 ἔργα παιδαρχικῆς ἀμέλειας  
 ὅπως κάλλιστ' ἀμφὶ κόμαις.

Remark what an instance is here furnished by Pindar in celebrating the glories of Xenophon of Corinth—"That one single day which passes so quickly! placed around his head these three illustrious deeds, or the crown, which was the reward of his victory in the Stadium, the Diadium, and the armed course."\* And, again, the same expression occurs the day ταχυτὰς ποδῶν ἐξίζεται;† so that even when commemorating the glory of a conqueror, he deemed it right to remind him of the shortness of the day which procured it, and consequently of that in which he could enjoy it. Indeed, the Pæan, as a song of rejoicing for victory, always bore a mournful sense in reference to the battle, as well as a joyous sense in reference to the victory. Dionysius, after relating the combat of the Horatii and Curatii, and the joyful triumph of the victor, adds, "but it was necessary that, as a man, he should not be happy throughout, but should excite the envy of the demon; who, when he had exalted him, contrary to the expectation of all, and, in a moment, even to the highest pinnacle of glory and happiness, cast him down the very same day into the miserable calamity of killing his own sister."‡ Cicero, in his oration for the Manilian law, furnishes a similar example of the scrupulous timidity and extreme caution with which it was deemed right to speak of the happiness of the prosperous, so fearfully uncertain was its stability, and so necessary did they feel it to be always prepared against what they termed the stroke of envious fate. This, too, is what the lofty grave tragedians taught—

ὡ βρότα πρᾶγματ'· ἐντυχόντα μὲν  
 σκυῖ τις ἂν τρέψαιεν· εἰ δ' ἐ δυστυχίᾳ,  
 βολαῖς ὑγρώσσαν σπύργος ὤλεσεν γραφὴν.  
 καὶ ταύτ' ἐκείνων μᾶλλον οἰκτιέρα πολὺ.¶

Let no one, then, ascribe melancholy to the history of the renovated race. Bitter and profound has been the mourning of men in all ages, who enjoyed not the consolations of faith, as antiquity will avow; and even our own times bear witness; for many of the modern writers have raised again the desolating voice of the heathen lamentations, if not with that Philoctetean clamour which old philosophy deemed unbecoming, yet often in a strain of even still more wild despair. What is the tone of modern literature and modern poetry? Does it indicate smiling hearts, elate with peacefulness and joy? Truly it expresses only that sadness of the world which, in the language of the Holy Spirit, worketh death.§ Only those suggestions which proceed from anguish of the mind and humours black, that mingle with the fancy, distempered, discontented thoughts, inordinate desires, like those which moved Dicæopolis to exclaim, "How many things devour my heart! very few things delight me; truly not more than four. What torment me are as numerous as the sands of the sea shore."\*\* In fact, without the Catholic piety, the Catholic type and hope to support one, life must necessarily

\* Olymp. xiii.

† Olymp. i.

‡ Antiquit. Roman. lib. iii. cap. 21.

¶ Æsch. Agam. 1327.

§ Epist. ad Corinth. ii. 7.

\*\* Aristoph. Acharnensis.

grow every day, in the estimation of the heart, more flat, stale, and unprofitable; for there is constantly something dropping off, something dying, something happening for the last time, so that every man will have the sad experience of the troubadour and warrior, Bertram de Born, who complains of this constant and rapid decay, saying, "*Tous les jours vous verrez qu'aujourd'hui vaut moins qu'hier.*" Age itself disables the mind from supporting the calamities of life, as is confessed by Dante in an affecting allusion to his own power of enduring the misfortunes which befell his country—

—— "That chance  
Were in good time, if it befell thee now.  
Would so it were, since it must needs befall!  
For, as time wears me, I shall grieve the more."\*

The dismal lucubrations of modern philosophers and poets can only inspire the idea of a gloomy consistency, composed of persons who, in their disdain of the holy discipline, sit, like Michol, full of scorn and sorrow,† disfigured, more than can befall spirit of happy sort.

Alas! if men in ages of faith could, in a dream, have been brought, in presence of this present intellectual world, after searching with fixed ken, to know what place it was wherein they stood, they might have supposed themselves for certain on the brink of the lamentable vale—the dread abyss, that joins a thundrous sound of complaints innumerable. Dark, and deep, and thick with clouds o'erspread, their eyes might in vain have sought to explore its bottom, but would have discerned nought. What bitterness is expressed in that exclamation—

"There are words of deeper sorrow  
Than the wail above the dead!"

What approximation to despair in that avowal of hope being subject to contingency, when it is said—

"Circumstance, that unspiritual god  
And miscreator, makes and helps along  
Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,  
Whose touch turns hope to dust, the dust we all have trod."‡

What a contrast to the bright visions which cheer the way of those on earth who afterwards are blessed, when the poet says—

—— "Standing thus by thee  
Other days come back on me  
With recollected music, though the tone  
Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy groan  
Of dying thunder on the distant wind."

Such is the revelation which the modern poet and modern philosopher continually makes of the state of his own heart; and is it for such men to shrink from consulting the history of the ages of faith through fear of its inspiring them with melancholy? Alas! what deeper gloom can come upon this poor soul than that which already encompasses it?

"Dost thou not hear how pitiful his moan,  
Nor mark the death which, in the torrent flood,  
Swoln mightier than a sea, him struggling holds."§

\* Hell, xxvi.

† Dante, *Purg.* x.

‡ Manfred, iv.

§ Hell, ii.



Thus do these tender and elevated souls move along, thirsty, wandering, like those shades deprived of sepulture, and condemned to an eternal restlessness. They can find no place of repose or refreshment in the sterile desert of the world; they sigh, without ceasing, for some, I know not what, mysterious power, which they call liberty or progress, humanity or reason, a kind of liberating divinity, who they think must eventually prevail, and it is with this vain hope that they seek to console themselves.

The Catholic poet, in ages of faith, trained to communion with the holy, assiduous at the early sacrifice, and accustomed to walk unnoticed amidst the evening crowd of faithful which surrounds the divine altars to receive a benediction, hoped hereafter, in a future world, to consort for ever with the saintly spirits he had seen on earth, and to join the choir which keeps eternal festival in heaven: the genius of his song was that of one who is happy—who has no morbid peculiarities of thought or temper. The modern poet, nursed only amidst the wild and lonely scenes of nature, and familiar rather with the howl of winds, and the fall of mountain torrents, than with the hymn of saintly fervour, whose soul hath only known the sublime but sad delight of gazing on pathless glen and mountain high—

“Listing where from the cliffs the torrents thrown,  
Mingle their echo with the eagle’s cry;”

though, having often felt how that sad loneliness loaded his heart, and how that barren desert tired his eye, when he would have wished to trace something that showed of life, though low and mean, yet, for the future, has no brighter hope, while gazing upon the ocean flood, but that it will be a pleasant thing to die—

“To be resolved into the elemental wave,  
Or take his portion with the winds that rave.”

Such was the spirit of the chorus of *Æschylus*—

“Oh! that I could as smoke arise,  
That rolls its black wreaths thro’ the air,  
Mix with the clouds, that o’er their skies  
Show their bright forms, and disappear;  
Or, like the dust, be tost  
By every sportive wind, till all be lost!”\*

And such is the spirit of the king of modern poets, in that most inhuman aspiration:

—————“I can see  
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be  
A link reluctant in a fleshy chain,  
Class’d among creatures, when the soul can flee,  
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain,  
Of ocean or the stars mingle, and not in vain.”†

The testimony of *Palinurus*, indeed, who had experience of this kind of dissolution, might have sufficed to show them how delusive were such anticipations.

“Nunc me fluctus habet, versantque in littore venti,  
Eripe me his, invicte, malis——.”‡

\* *Supplic.*

† *Childe Harold*, iii.

‡ *Æneid*, vi. 362.

The genius of melancholy must not be confounded with the melancholy of genius; but to the latter it is only the ages of faith that can lay claim. The former, the burden of Babylon, has been the lot of humanity in every period of the world's history, from the time when sin with vanity had filled the works of men. To this fact there is express testimony in all ages; although, without doubt, many of these mourners, from the effect of anticipations, having a certain infinite evil in life, might, like Niobe, have been imagined turned to stone on account of eternal silence in affliction—voiceless because so profound, of whom the Book of God affirmeth that he had stricken them, but they had not sorrowed, that is, had not confessed their sorrow, yet had he brought down their heart through heaviness; for to walk sorrowful all the day long is the state of sin.

William Schlegel observes, that the conduct of the greatest portion of mankind who live confined within the monotonous circle of little insignificant occupations, can only be accounted for by the necessity which they feel for endeavouring to escape from that secret discontent which presses them down, as soon as the passions of their youth which made their life run like a rapid torrent, have become weak and motionless. Therefore these means of distraction are employed, which are all designed to put in motion their slumbering faculties, by offering to them light difficulties. O Christ! how deep and bitter is the mourning of these men when they say with Montaigne, I have seen the verdure, and the flowers, and the fruit of life, and now I behold the withering, the sear and yellow leaf; or, with Philolaches in the old play, "my heart bleeds when I consider what I am and what I was; that formerly no youth excelled more in gymnastic art, in throwing the quoit, the spear, and the ball, in the course in the field, and that now I am nothing."\* This mourning sounds like the lugubrious cry of the birds of night, not the sighs of the dove which represent the blessed mourning, and than which nothing is more calculated to inspire peace, recollection, and internal joy. The world's children professedly indeed pursue a life of pleasure and festivity, but if we can credit one who knew them well, their "mirth hath less of play than bitterness."

"For many a stoic eye and aspect stern,  
Mark hearts where grief hath nought to learn;  
And many a withering thought lies hid, not lost,  
In smiles that least befit who wear them most."†

Truly when there is a penetrating eye this reflection will be often suggested. The laugh of pleasure's children may remind one of that inhuman man saying of the heathen Demænetus, "may all that wish me evil laugh so!"

Such mourning was a thing impossible to mix with blessedness. Nay, with spirits under its influence, as Shakspeare says in Hamlet, the devil is very potent, making use of those phantoms and images of memory, which, according to Aristotle,‡ melancholy persons are most apt to discern, in order to abuse and damn them. These are they who do violence to themselves and to their own blessings, wasting their talents in reckless lavishment and sorrowing there, where they should dwell in joy;|| wearing their days in wilful woe, and despising the

\* Plautus *Mostellaria*, 1, 2.

† Byron.

‡ *Περὶ αἰσθητικῶς*.

|| Dante, *Hell*, xi.

grace of their Creator, sitting like the Harpies in the Hell of Dante, and wailing o'er the drear mystic wood; whose melancholy springs from no other source, as ancient writers well have shown, but the passions which they have not learned in their youth to master.\* This is the mourning which mixes with the inextinguishable laughter of the suitors of Penelope, of whom Homer says, that while revelling with great triumph on the eve of their destruction, though shouts of merriment resounded through the hall, yet at intervals their eyes were filled with tears and their minds with sorrow :

ὅσσε δ' ἄρα σφείων  
δακρυόφιν πέμπλαντο γόον δ' ἔϊντο θυμός·

Theoclymenus regards this as an omen, and predicts their destruction. Thus all mourning, all poetic melancholy, is not the presage of a blessed end.

Beati qui lugent. But not those who mourn with the world, or who weep through vanity at feigned misery. St. Augustin knocked his breast for having wept on reading the death of Dido in Virgil, who slew herself on being abandoned by her lover Æneas; because he knew well that such tears were without any emotion of charity, and consequently that they were not in any degree agreeable to God, who demands from us only tears of love, in confirmation of which judgment the world itself can be adduced in evidence, for its poets affirm that the wretched are malevolent and envious.

“Est miserorum, ut malevolentes sint atque invadeant bonis.”†

Far, indeed, then, is such mourning from the blessing promised. It is the sorrow which dwells for ever upon the cursed strand that every man must pass who fears not God. Let us move onward, for faith has no entrance here.

## CHAPTER II.

Now we are arrived at the point where our inquiries must return to the domain of history, in order to ascertain what was the character of mourning during the ages of faith, and how far the woe of the human heart was affected by the supernatural condition of man's life in relation to the knowledge conveyed in the mysteries of religion. In the first place then a retrospect of Christian history will prove, that the mourning commended from the mountain was understood to be something very different from the spirit which we have been observing—the mourning of animal men, the mourning of Babylon, without charity and without

---

\* Christine di Pisan, *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage Roy Charles V.* chap. x.

† Plautus *Capteivei*, iii. 4.



peace. Sooth, to hear the admonitions of those whose writings influenced mankind during the ages of faith, and to mark their countenances as described so graphically in ancient books, one might at first suppose that the blessing had not been pronounced in their estimation upon the state of mourners; but upon that of those who always rejoiced, and who, like the followers of old Pythagoras, considered sadness a vice and a disgrace to be hidden from the eyes of men, for if it ever came upon a Pythagorean, he was to withdraw himself from all observation, and set about removing it by using the remedies prescribed by his discipline, remedies which indeed could hardly have been efficacious, but the recourse to which proves the just abhorrence in which melancholy was held. What was the character of mourning during the ages of faith? Truly one may feel at a loss how to answer this question; for the first impressions consequent upon a study of their history, as far as it is comprised in the thoughts, and doctrines, and manners of men, would lead us to conclude, that the race of mourners had disappeared; and that within the promised land, nothing was ever found but smiles and joy. Where shall we look for mourners? We may conceive at once that the task is difficult; for how can there be melancholy where the Catholic religion sways, which ever invigorates men with hope that leads to blissful end? How great is that hope, and how it doth flourish in them, even its adversaries admit; for the only question with them, they say, is to account for the exemption of Catholics from despair and trouble of mind? Hope excludes sadness, and the church militant hath in every age armed all her sons with hope. Let us, however, investigate more narrowly.

Burton, who wrote a professed treatise upon melancholy, would direct us to the abodes of monks and friars, as being men whom he affirms to be continually under its dreadful influence. But lo! the fact is so contrary to his representation, that cheerfulness appears as one of the first results from entering the pleasant cloister's pale. "Do you see these novices?" asks St. Bernard, "they are but just come, but just converted. What appears in them is only a flower, for the season of fruit is not yet arrived. This new conversation is a flower. They assume a face of discipline and a good composition of their whole body. I grant that what appears is pleasing—that greater negligence of exterior dress—fewer words—a more joyful countenance—a more bashful look; yet these are but flowers, and rather the promise of fruit than fruit itself."† Does length of time, think you, and a progress in that course of perfect life, produce a change in this respect? Hear what instructions and doctrines belonged to the monastic discipline. "The Holy Ghost cannot suffer the odious sadness of the children of the world to remain in the soul of his servants." He who thus speaks is the monk who wrote that discourse to a nun which is commonly ascribed to St. Bernard. "Let a spiritual joy remain always within you as a testimony that you are at peace with God. This innocent and tranquil joy is an assured mark of virtue and an earnest of sanctity. If it were not so, David would not have said, rejoice ye just in the Lord and leap for joy."—"There is even a joy natural but innocent, which is a gift of heaven;

\* Burton Anat. of Mel. iii. 4.

† S. Bernardi super Cantica Serm. lxiii.

a precious fruit of peace with God," says the holy Capuchin friar Lombez, in his treatise on the joy of the soul. "You destroy the divine image in your soul by sadness," he continues, "God is joy.\* 'Serveite Domino in lætitia.' All nature rejoices in its Creator, and would you remain in a sad silence? The saints are always full of joy and cheerfulness; in the midst of vast deserts and solitudes, under persecution and suffering, joy is on their countenances. It is joy which makes the heart fear God. 'Lætetur cor meum, ut timeat nomen tuum.'"<sup>†</sup>

John, the monk of Cluny, in his life of St. Odo, the second abbot of that house, says, "His words were always full of rejoicing; insomuch, that he used to constrain us, through excess of joy, to laugh, which mirth he would moderate with admonitions; but his spiritual cheerfulness diffused internal joy through our hearts. Not being allowed to testify our feelings openly, we used secretly to kiss his vestments."<sup>‡</sup> But this is an investigation which may be terminated without waiting to consult history; for, if in the present age, the manners and countenance of the religious in monasteries bespeak invariably the sweet influence of constant internal rejoicing, and no other inference is possible after observing them, there can be no danger of error in concluding that it was the same in the ages of greatest faith; for then the world was more frequently opposed by forms of attraction, and consequently there were fewer obstacles to the peace and joy which religion can impart to men.

Will the moderns look for sadness in the air of those pilgrims, who are the objects of so much of their pity? Let them refer to the portrait of one who was a saint, a model and example of all pilgrims. St. Wilfrid, afterwards Bishop of York, made a pilgrimage to Rome, and it is expressly related, that on the way he was to all men affable, and that he never contracted a sad countenance.<sup>||</sup>

If they repair to the solitary hermit's dwelling in the woods and caves of the rocks, they will not have better success. Sebastian Francus Von Word, in the third part of his Chronicle, expressly testifies of the holy hermit Nicolas Von der Flue, that he was never melancholy, but always joyous. But surely it will be said, we cannot be at a loss for examples of sadness, if we turn to the solemn Doctors and Holy Fathers of the Church, who spent their lives in the defence and illustration of the Christian faith? The very aspect of their volumes denotes men abandoned to the gloom of interminable toil. Truly the difficulty remains the same as before. St. Gregory reckons sadness among the seven capital sins. § St. Chrysostom's chief object in writing to Olympias, the deaconess, is to extirpate the melancholy to which she had been unhappily a prey. "Not only do I wish to deliver you from sadness, but also to fill your soul with a pure and never-ending joy;" it is thus he writes to her. "Sadness," he continues, "is the most intolerable torment of the soul,—a grief beyond all expression,—a punishment more cruel than all punishments. It is like a worm, which gnaws not only our body, but whatever is most intimate within us. It is a night never-ending, a horrible tempest, a fever which consumes secretly. To those seized with it, the sun, the

\* *Traité de la joie de l'ame*, 2. 4.

† Ps. 85.

‡ *Bibliotheca Cluniacensis*, 33.

|| *Mabillon, Acta S. Ordinis Bened. Sæc. iv. pars. 1.*

§ C. xxxi. lib. xxxi. in *Exod.*

air, however pure, the most beautiful azure of the sky, become a burden, and the day becomes night; which made the prophet say, 'The sun shall set for them at mid-day.'\* No, the deep shades of night are not deeper than those of sadness, horrible night, insupportable night, night sinistrous and threatening, refusing to yield to those who would dispel it, but attaching itself to the soul which it has once seized upon, and never letting go its hold until this soul chooses to make use of its wisdom to escape from its power." You have heard how they speak. Nor is the result different if we refer to those ecclesiastical canons, which, from their title at least, might lead one to think that they had relation unto mourning. In the ancient Penitential of Angers, which happens to present itself first to my view, I find reckoned among the capital crimes "the sadness of the world, worldly sorrow." Not even the ascetic discipline will yield us any different result; for universally it rested upon the principle of that sacred text—"Piety will fill the heart with a joyous spirit and with gladness."† "Sadness proceedeth from self-love; and joy from the love of God." So we read in the *Meditations* for the English College at Lisbon: "The fruit is like the tree; that is, the joy is like to the love whence it proceedeth: true love is like to the thing loved; that is, like to God; and hence true joy must be like to God: that is, immortal, most copious, most beauteous, and most sweet."‡ The Church herself, in her solemn offices, prays to be delivered from present sadness, and to be conducted to the possession of eternal joy. That faithful spouse of Jesus Christ never mourns long without returning to the expressions of transport. Thus, in the middle of Lent, she changes the penitential tones to sing *Lætare Jerusalem*; and, in a similar manner, she interrupts the solemn chaunts of Advent to sing *Gaudete*. What is very remarkable too, the world itself, if considered in reference to the scenes of chivalrous life, seems, during these ages, to have ceased to favour the melancholy which is its natural companion; so that its maxims were directed to the same end as those of the spiritual society, and its ways delivered from all horrid exhibitions of desperate woe. If you will hear fable, which, at that epoch, peculiarly borrowed its language from living manners, you will find King Pharamond, in *Gyron le Courtois*, reproving Messire du Lac, for indulging in a sorrow which was unbecoming. "Se Dieu me sault si bon chevalier comme vous estes ne deveroit mye trop penser pour nulle aventure de ce monde. Et certes vous pensez orendroit plus que a preudhomme ne convient."—"Sire, (replied Messire du Lac) mon cueur si est seigneur de moy, mais je ne suis mye seigneur de luy."|| You will hear the hermit Peter reproving the vain grief of Tancred on the death of Clorinda, as offending against the spirit of his order:

"His vanity with grave advice reprov'd,  
And told what mourning Christian knights behov'd.  
O Tancred, Tancred! how far different  
From thy beginnings good these follies be!  
Thou dost refuse of Heav'n the proffer'd grace,  
And 'gainst it still rebel with sinful ire;  
O wretch! O whither doth thy rage thee chase?  
Refrain thy grief, bridle thy fond desire:

\* Amos, viii. 9.

† Eccles. i. 18.

‡ Part iv. c. 2.

§ F. lxxxviii.



At hell's wide gate vain sorrow doth thee place.  
 Sorrow, misfortune's son, despair's foul sire :  
 O see thine ill, thy plaint and woe refrain,  
 The guides to death, to hell, and endless pain."\*

During the middle ages, rare was the crime of Piero delle Vigne, who, when his glad honours changed to bitter woes, with soul disdainful and disgusted, sought refuge in death from scorn, and became, just as he was, unjust toward himself. It was so rare, that men considered it in the light of a prodigy. Peter Damien mentions that Hugo, abbot of Cluny, used to relate to him a strange example of a certain stranger, who destroyed himself through the impulse of the demon. "There was a Bishop," he says, "travelling, who came to the banks of a river, where he halted to repose for a short time. As he was resting there, he thought he heard a voice, proceeding as if from the flood, which said, 'Hora venit, homo non venit.' The Bishop shortly after observed a man on horseback, who came galloping to the brink, as if resolved to make his horse plunge into the stream. By the Bishop's directions the attendants, who rushed forwards, succeeded in preventing him, though he persisted in crying out, 'Let me go—I must hasten on the king's errand; an inevitable necessity bids me proceed.' The holy Bishop constrained him to take up his abode with him that night. When every one was sunk in sleep, the stranger plunged his head into a vessel of water which stood in the chamber, and suffocated himself."†

The epoch of the great apostasy of the sixteenth century was distinguished by the frequency of this fearful crime. Petrus Crinitus mentions that in France certain women had lately committed suicide, throwing themselves into rivers, which gave occasion to several learned men to investigate the cause of such a phenomenon, which could only be ascribed to the power of the stars, and to some influence of the air impelling men to madness, and he is obliged to recur to the ancients for similar instances. He mentions, indeed, that a philosopher at Florence, Peter Leonio, and another scholar, deeply versed in Aristotle and Hippocrates, had lately drowned themselves, but it was through an excess of madness, in which they ought to have been bound with chains.‡

What, then, becomes of our project, to illustrate the manners of the blessed race from the history and learning of the ages of faith, if on the one hand we are told, by the voice of unerring wisdom, that they who mourn are blessed; and on the other, if we can find no trace or sanction of mourning in the ages when we suppose faith to have principally flourished? Softly, my gentle comrade; all is not yet seen: we have as yet been confronted only with the mourning of the world: and how should it be wonderful, or a source of inquietude, that we should have met with no trace of such a spirit in the manners or discipline of those who had renounced the world, during ages of faith? It has not been demonstrated, that the third blessed sentence from the Mount fell a powerless sound upon the ear of the humble and the meek, or that it found nothing in their character or existence to which it was applicable. They were cheerful and full of joyful peace: but it does not follow that

\* Jerus. Deliv. xii. 86.

† De Honesta Disciplina, lib. iii. c. 9.

‡ Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 438.

they were deprived of the third beatitude: they did not mourn with the world; but we must not infer that they rejoiced with it. Neither earthly sorrow nor earthly joy, in the perverted sense of that expression, belonged to them, but the mourning of holy exiles, resting in this Inn of grief, the sighs of the innocent dove, longing after its home and country, were no less characteristic of their whole existence than were the peace and joy of renovated and spiritualized creatures restored to the favour of their Creator, and destined to dwell hereafter in everlasting gladness. It is not to be imagined for an instant that their cheerfulness bore any resemblance to the disposition of those persons whose lips seem always moved to laughter, or to provoking it in others. Though totally free from that Jansenian gloom, which pervades the thoughts of a celebrated philosopher of later times, there was nothing vulgar or ignoble in their sweet and joyous serenity: it would lead no one to conceive that they could ever inwardly breathe a prayer like that of the parasite of Plautus: "Grant me riches, praise, profit, play, mirth, festivity, feasting, pomp, pleasure, revelling, satiety, joy:"\* but it might remind one of the tone of those solemn quires described by Dante,—

—— "and lo!

A sound of weeping and a song: 'My lips,  
O Lord!' and these so mingled, it gave birth  
To pleasure and to pain."†

Even the ancient sages, who, like the Pythagoreans, declared open war against melancholy, would not have approved of the former temper: they indeed pretended to possess divine remedies against the wounds of sadness!‡ and Aristoxenus affirmed that they used to refrain from all lamentations and tears; but as a general and pervading tone, they would have rejected utterly and with scorn the pert and nimble spirit of mirth, at least as it appears in the common laugh. Socrates, showing that at the last the souls of men will correspond in appearance to their character in life, says that Thersites will be seen in the form of an ape. || "It may be well," says the Athenian in Plato, "to make oneself acquainted with things ridiculous, in order that one may the better learn what is opposed to them; but it is not possible to practise both, and partake in the least degree of virtue." § Plato would not allow the inextinguishable laughter of the Homeric gods even among the men of his republic. *'Αλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ φιλογέλωτας γε δεῖ εἶναι. οὔτε ἄρα ἀνθρώπους ἀξίους λόγου κρατοῦ- μένους ὑπὸ γέλωτος ἂν τις ποιῇ ἀπεδυστέον. \*\** While on earth, heroes of his type bore that countenance which Dante ascribes to those four mighty spirits which he beheld within the awful porch, which were of semblance neither sorrowful nor glad. †† The sweet countenance of blessed spirits, bespoke, no doubt, an abundant felicity; but still, it indicated the constant exercise of mystic joy, tempering the sweet with bitter. "The joy of the just," says Drexelius, "is not that of the gay and frivolous, occupied with Saturnalian festivities and Bacchanalian orgies." "Placidum et occultum illud gaudium est, et cum gravitate, imo severitate conjunctum." ††† Thus St. Jerome describes that perfect priest, Nepo-

\* Capteivei, iv. 1.

|| De Repub. lib. x.

†† Hell. iv.

† Purg. xxiii.

‡ Jamblich. de Pythagoric. vita, cap. 15, 16. 31.

§ De Legibus, lib. vii.

\*\* De Repub. lib. iii.

†† De Conformit. Voluntat. Hum. cum Div. lib. iii. 2.

gianus—"Gravitate morum hilaritate frontis temperabat."\* In the restored and sanctified nature was discernible, to the more instructed and penetrating eye, a mourning that may be termed natural, inasmuch as, although nature was repaired and assisted in them, it was not unmade or condemned utterly in any of its principles as false and vicious. There was discernible also the mourning of wisdom, the mourning of love, the mourning of piety, the mourning of penitents, the mourning of exiles, who had to meet death before they could reach their country. On each of these points, with history and the learning of the ages of faith for our guide, let us briefly dwell. And first, what is to be said respecting this natural mourning, distinct from the mourning of mere animals of earth, and yet which, in some respects, was of it, since it grew out of the relations and circumstances of the present existence? It would be difficult to find words more exact and beautiful to describe it than those which the Church uses, in that sublime prayer of preparation offered by the priest, when he confesses his unworthiness to discharge so holy an office, and beseeches God that his sins may not be the means of rendering the great sacrifice unprofitable to others: "for, O Lord," he adds, "I bear, if thou vouchsafest to behold favourably, the tribulations of the people, the perils of nations, the groans of captives, the miseries of orphans, the necessities of those that travel, the wants of the weak, the despair of the languid, the defects of old men, the sighs of youths, the vows of virgins, the lamentations of widows."

Such is the view of the state of humanity which the Church presents to her minister when she supposes him about to celebrate her consoling mysteries; and it does not appear that philosophers or poets, during the middle ages, were inclined to take a different, even in their lightest compositions. Gouget remarks of the celebrated poet, Alain Chartier, that he alludes to the calamities of life, even in those pieces which he seemed at first intending to consecrate to joy alone. Thus one of them concludes:—

"Adieu chansons que volentiers chantoye  
Et joyeux dictz où je me delectoye  
Tel rit joyeux, qui après dolent pleure  
Rien ne m'est bon, n' autre bien n' assaveure  
Fors seulement l' attente que je meure;  
Et me tarde que briefment viengne l'heure  
Qu' après ma mort en Paradis la voye."†

"Grief" prompted him, as he says, to write his most considerable work in prose, which is entitled "Hope, or the Consolation of the three Virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity."

— "Par douleur ay commencé ce livre  
Je souloye ma jeunesse acquitter  
A joyeuses escriptures dicter.  
Or me convient autre chose tissir,  
De cuer dolent ne pouroit joye yssir."

Under a joyous title, we are often presented with serious meditations, as in the work entitled *Le Passetems de tout homme et de toute femme*, composed by Brother Guillaume Alexis, commonly called the good

\* Epist. xxxv.

† Bibliothèque Française, tom. ix. 164.



monk of Lire, an abbey in Normandy. The pastime alluded to proves to be nothing else but the miseries belonging to the human condition. The author follows man from his cradle to his death-bed, and shows that, in every stage of his course, he is called to suffer.\* Such strains used to echo under the chivalrous halls of our ancestors, even at the festal hour: for perfectly in character with them was that simple lay of Albert Graeme in Branksome Tower, when he sung of the English lady bright, that would marry the knight of Scotland.—

“Blithely they saw the rising sun  
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall;  
But they were sad ere day was done,  
Though love was still the lord of all.”

Do you mark how they correspond with the religious view of life?

“They touch the chords of joy, but low  
And mournful answer notes of woe.”

Indeed this view of man's condition corresponds with Nature in her noblest estate; for they whose spirits seem most elastic, cheerful, and buoyant, by a certain apparent contradiction in their structure, are always fond of what is solemn, and of lingering amidst the tombs. And hence, to such minds, the charm of the Catholic religion, which is at one time joyous as the lark singing at heaven's gates beneath the morning cloud; and at another, solemn as the sound of the distant bell, or of the waving grove under the wind of night: while Protestantism is always sad or always dissipated. The spirit of Catholicism is in harmony with that of a genuine drama, which is tragic and yet infinitely mild,—a mixture of joy and sorrow. What means the Church in bidding the priest to bear in mind the sighs of youths? It is that she has deeply observed nature; for youth the most joyous season in life,—is that in which men are enamoured with seeing sad pageants of men's miseries, with tales of woe,—and when they take more delight in weeping than in words; when, according to Shakspeare, they are sad as night only from wantonness. As if they who were most capable of enjoying the rich banquet of life, found a pleasure all the while in knowing that, even on such an earth as this, they were in a world of woe. As poor Duncan says, “Their plenteous joys, wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves in drops of sorrow.” The poet's child is one who has, like Wilfred,

“A heart too soft, from early life,  
To hold with Fortune needful strife;  
Hour after hour who loved to pore  
On Shakspeare's rich and varied lore,  
But turn'd from martial scenes and light,  
From Falstaff's feast and Percy's fight,  
To ponder Jacques' moral strain,  
And muse with Hamlet, wise in vain;  
And weep himself to soft repose  
O'er gentle Desdemona's woes.”†

It is one who might say of himself to Ossian, in the words of Delamartine, “My heart is yet warm with the fire of youth; I have not thy years, but I have already thy sadness.” In fact, all passions to which

\* Massieu, *Hist. de la Poesie Française*, 35.

† Rokeby.

youth is subject, end like a tragedy: as Novalis says, "All defective things to which nature introduces them, end with death. So the philosophy of sensation, of fancy, and of ideas. All poesy, which is to them so dear, has a tragic tenor. All genuine jest, for which they have so true a perception, has a serious foundation."\* "In the primitive time of fancy," says Frederick Schlegel, "we find that the elegiac was the predominant tone of poesy, as if a melancholy remembrance of the past godly world, and heroic age, or as a sorrowful echo of the lost paradisiacal innocence and heavenly state; or in a still higher and more general sense, as the forlorn lamentation over the blessed childhood of the whole creation, before the spiritual world had been torn asunder by divisions,—before the beginning of all evil, and the consequent calamities of nature."†

A similar tone may be traced in the poetic compositions which were most passionately loved during the middle ages. Many of those wild and tender chaunts were sad as the song of Linus, or the melancholy Carian strain on Phrygian flute—sad as the song of Hylas sung at fountains in the Mysian land, or the song of the beautiful Bormus, whose watery death was deplored by the husbandmen of Mariandyné on the flute in the middle of summer. The thoughts of men were then but little occupied with the present in comparison with the past and future; and in this respect, the spirit of the Catholic religion would subject every one to the sneers of such writers as Athenæus, who laughs at Plato, calling him "memory's friend," ὁ τῆς μνημοσύνης φίλος. Religion, indeed, expressly recommended the mourning which springs from memory, and, in the beautiful words of St. Augustin, distinguished it from the sadness of the world. "Let us sit and weep, remembering Sion. For many weep with Babylonian tears, who also rejoice with a Babylonian joy. We ought to weep but from remembering Sion. The waters of Babylon flow and pass. Let us weep by them, but beware how we enter them, lest we should be borne away and swallowed up in them. Let us sit by them and weep; and we shall weep if we remember Sion. O that peace which we shall see with God! O that peace and holy equality of angels! O that beautiful spectacle, that transcendent vision!"‡

Music, poetry, and painting, during the ages of faith, seem only the expression of desire, of longing; and if any should adopt the opinion of Winkelman respecting the effects of such melancholy, which he ascribes to the Etrurians, and by which he attempts to account for their not having surpassed mediocrity in the fine arts, and should, on the same grounds, deny that our ancestors could have possessed the soft emotion which renders the spirit perfectly susceptible of the beautiful, I would refer him to the reply which is made by Pignotti, in his "History of Tuscany," where he observes, "That the acute and deep sensations which Winkelman acknowledges belong to the melancholy disposition, are so far from being, as he pretends, incompatible, that they are, on the contrary, inseparably connected with a lively imagination, the first origin of the fine arts, and that melancholy and religious compassion characterize the greatest masterpieces which enrich the Vatican. To the

\* Novalis Schriften, ii. 233.

† S. Augustini Tractat. in Psalm. cxxxvi.

Vol. II.—22

P

‡ Philosophie der Sprache, 123.

deep humanity of the Catholic religion belonged necessarily the melancholy of compassion for the natural calamities of man. That sorrow, to which kings would bow, was a worthy cause for defiling the serenest eye. Every cloister and every castle had its tale, that had made mourn both wise and simple; for, however calamitous, all events were to be related, that none of the gifts of Heaven might be concealed from men. And now, if I were to select examples from the chronicles of the middle ages, "methinks," as Homer says, "the light of the sun would set upon our weeping." Lionel Woodville, Bishop of Salisbury, died through sorrow and pity for the fate of others. This member of an illustrious and unhappy family, was brother to Edward the Fourth's queen, the most unfortunate in English history. His own fortunes, being a Churchman, were not overthrown in the wreck of that family; but when Buckingham, who had married one of his sisters, was beheaded in the market place of Salisbury, the Bishop did not long survive the grief of this last affliction. Life was full of lamentations, which found an echo in hearts, which only had more concern for others, from having renounced self-love. Who knows not these things?—who has not pity?—would be the language of those who might "feel themselves," as Dante says, "on all sides well squared to fortune's blows."

"Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora."

We shall see, in a future place, that this was not a sterile compassion; but it will serve, at present, to explain why, even from natural causes, the noblest spirits, during the ages of faith, appeared in the character of mourners; and that they did so, we have the express attestation of history. "He was of a melancholy turn of mind," says Fontenelle, of the great Pierre Corneille; and, speaking of John de Medicis, Machiavel says, "Though there was a little melancholy in his disposition, he knew how to please in conversation."\* "Raro quidem lætus," says Petrarch, describing the state of his own mind during the course of his correspondence with Socrates, "mœstus sæpe."† Le Banni de Liesse was the title assumed by John Meschinot sieur de Mortieres, a French poet, contemporary of Chastellain, to express his affliction for the misfortunes of the dukes of Bretagne.‡ Antonio Fulgoso, that noble poet of Genoa, was surnamed Fileremo, on account of his fondness for seclusion; and Hugues Salel, in the reign of Francis I., in his poem "On the Misery and Inconstancy of Human Life," lays it down as a maxim, that we should often choose mournful subjects for contemplation, because long continued joy becomes wearisome.|| It is questionable, whether Shakspeare meant to convey a censure when he speaks of one "so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth." *Triste et pensif* was the device adopted by Michael Marot; and the same tone of melancholy which Charles Duke of Orleans ascribes to himself, in that affecting poem, which begins—

"Laissez moy penser à mon aise;  
Helas! donnez m'en le loisir—"

and which seemed so constant an attendant on pre-eminence, that every

\* Hist. of Florence, lib. iv.

† Gouget Bibliothèque Française, ix. 404.

‡ Præf. in Epist. Pam.

|| Id. tom. xii. 8.



man in high honour seemed, in his very countenance, to proclaim the justice of S. Bonaventure's exclamation, "*Quis in honore sine dolore esse poterit?*" That tone is spoken of by Fenelon, in describing James II. of England, as something full of dignity and meekness: he terms it, "*Son sérieux doux et complaisant.*"\* Dante had no need to paint from his imagination in that affecting description of one spirit that he meets in purgatory—

"Behold that lofty shade, who this way tends,  
And seems too woe-begone to drop a tear,  
How yet the regal aspect he retains."†

If these few instances are not sufficient to show the general character of noble minds, in this respect, during the middle ages, it will be easy for any one to multiply them, by referring to our ancient literature, which supplies similar portraits at almost every page. This melancholy of Catholics during ages of faith, whether considered as the melancholy of genius, of honour, of compassion, of love, or of piety, had a distinctive character, which totally separated it from the gloom of heathen or modern times. It was the melancholy recommended by the Apostle, "*quasi tristes, semper autem gaudentes:*" it was without malice, rancour, pusillanimity, despair, tepidity, or wandering of mind; and, therefore, it was not involved in the condemnation passed by holy men, like the Abbot Raban Maur, though that were directed against melancholy.‡ The necessity for human suffering, so obvious to reason, that the Pythagoreans used to say, "*Men ought to welcome punishment, since they came into the world only in order to be punished,*"§ is involved in the mystery of the fall; and during ages of faith, the light affliction which arose from it, for a moment, was received by mourners with pious resignation. Let us hear them speak of it, that we may understand what a deep sense they entertained of this mystery. The Master of the Sentences, in laying down a threefold liberty, observes, that the last which he terms the liberty from misery can only be obtained in the future beatitude.¶ Hugo de St. Victor wrote a treatise, entitled, "*Cur flet qui gaudet,*" alluding to the joy of the Church, which in this valley of tears, is never without weeping; and the holy Fathers teach, that the perfect prayer is mixed with joy and sadness. "*The sweetness of honey,*" says St. Jerome, "*was to be tempered by art before it could be offered in sacrifice to God, for nothing voluptuous pleases God—nothing which has not in it something of austere truth. The paschal of Christ was to be eaten with bitter herbs.*"\*\* Nay, even in relation to the mere temporal felicity of man, mark how mysterious a thing is woe. Cardan could attest the fact, which furnishes an axiom in the science of the saints; for, he says, "*sine malorum experientia nihil esse dulce homini.*"†† The poet goes further still, where he shows how soon men begin to loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof "*a little more than a little is by much too much.*" Unheeding such refined considerations, men,

\* *Epîtres de Fenelon*, 103.

† *Purg.* xviii.

‡ *Rabani Mauri de Institutione Clericorum*, lib. iii. cap. 38.

§ *Jamblich. de Pathagoric. vita*, cap. 18.

¶ *Petri Lombardi. lib. xi. Distinct.* 25.

\*\* *S. Hieronymi Epist.* xxiii.

†† *Prudentia Civilis*, cap. 4.

in the middle ages, were at all times ready to welcome sorrow as a blessed thing; either receiving it in the spirit, and, with the words of S. Lupe, when he saluted Attila, exclaiming, "Salve, flagellum Dei,"—or in reference only to the future compensation which would follow it. If they pretended not to be able to walk erect on the waves of the tribulation of this life, as our Lord walked on the sea, yet, at least, they felt that they could (as St. Augustin says) be borne over them on the wood of the cross, and on the model of Christ crucified. "*Scientia sanctorum est*," says St. Bernard, "*hic temporaliter cruciari, et delectari in æternum*."\* "Lazarus, merely because he bore sadness and affliction with courage, obtained the same abode as the great patriarch, whose life had been one series of the most brilliant actions. I will add to this," continues St. Chrysostom, "one consideration which, from being new and perhaps foreign from the common manner of thinking, is no less true; it is this, that even when we should have accomplished some eminent deed of virtue, if labour, if danger, if misfortune, be not, in some measure, mixed with it, the recompence will not be great. The Scripture does not say, that each one will be recompensed in proportion to his virtuous actions; but rather in proportion to the quantum of adversity which he will have supported. Thus, St. Paul enumerating the subjects of his glorying, gloried chiefly in his having suffered so much; for, after saying, 'Are they ministers of Jesus Christ? I dare to say it, I am more;' and to prove that he is really superior to them, he does not say, I preached the word of God to so many millions of men; but, keeping silence as to his virtues and his other merits, he gives a picture of all the calamities he has endured:—'I have lived in the midst of labours, in prisons, and the rest.' Do you see what sufferings were here, and how many occasions of glorifying? Presently, he adds to these the acts of virtue, and, in enumerating them, he makes us see that still sufferings are to him a more solid title than all the rest, for it is always in the same sense. 'Which of you is sick, and I am not also;' he does not say, and I do not endeavour to heal him; but, and I am not also. 'Which of you is scandalized, and I am not consumed interiorly;' he does not say, and I do not deliver him from the scandal: but, and I do not take share in his pains, and in his sorrow."†—"There is no motive," says St. Gregory Nazianzen, in his letter to Thecla, "more proper to make us courageously endure calamities, and to raise us above the generality of men in affliction, than the remembrance of the promises which we made to God, and the hopes which we conceived when we first embraced the true philosophy. Was it, then, our object to live in abundance and in riches, to taste the vain joys and the insane delights of the world, to strew our path with flowers; or rather, on the contrary, did we not expect tribulations, pains, anguish, and to endure all things in hopes of future good? Ah! it is this last lot, not the former, which we were taught to reckon upon. Let us take care, then, how we violate the covenant that we made with God, by wishing to possess, at the same time, the advantages and the goods of this world, and to preserve the hope of the future. Let us leave our conventions standing, and let us support all the woes of life, in hope of

\* Serm. 21. de divers.

† St. Chrysostom, Epist. to Olympias Deaconess.

the joys of eternity." Although the whole subject of human suffering was involved in mystery, yet the advantages resulting from it were most clearly discernible with the light of faith. "One single 'thanks be to God!' and 'blessed be God!' uttered in adversity, is of more avail," says Father Avila, "than a thousand thanksgivings in the day of prosperity;" and, therefore, as St. Aloysius Gonzaga used to say, "There is no more evident mark of a man's being a saint, and of the number of the elect, than to behold him of a devout life, and, at the same time, exercised with desolations, sufferings, and tribulations." Ah! how much wiser Job in calamity than Adam in Paradise! The one says, "Sicut Domino placuit ita factum est!" the other, "Vocem tuam audiavi et abscondi me!"\* But as this will appear still more clearly when we have proceeded further, let it be observed here, that the advantages of suffering were not altogether concealed from the ancients, who could only judge by the light of reason. Would you hear the heroic chaunt of the poet, whose lofty muse was to inspire conquerors? O, son of Philanor! you would have led an obscure life, and have never won a glorious renown, wasting your strength in ignoble contests in your domestic circle, like the cock that conquers in its familiar court, unless banishment, consequent on an insurrection, had driven you from your country—

Εἰ μὴ στάσις ἀντιάνηκε  
κινῶντας ἄμειρε πάντας.

Now you are a glorious victor in the Olympic contest, as well as having received twice the Pythic, and once the Isthmian crown.† Without labour, no one was ever illustrious nor ever shall be.‡ If there be any happiness with men, it does not appear without labour;|| but a life void of danger was granted neither to Peleus Æacides, nor to the divine Cadmus, yet they are both said to have obtained the highest felicity of mortals; who both heard the Muses singing in the mountains, and within the seven-gated Thebes; who both entertained the gods with hospitable rites; who both beheld the kingly sons of Saturn on their golden seats, and received from them nuptial gifts.§ The lessons of the ancient sage were to the same effect. Socrates speaks of banishment and bad health, as among the few causes which can enable men to pursue philosophy with a true spirit. "There remains, then," saith he, "but a very small number of men consorting with philosophy in a worthy manner; either men who have been punished with exile, of generous manners, and well educated, through a want of the causes which corrupt, so that the philosophic nature remains in them, or else men whom the bridle of our dear friend Theages is able to restrain; for Theages is surrounded, and furnished on all sides with things sufficient to make him fall from philosophy," such as riches, friends, honours, &c.; "but the continual suffering of his body from bad health, restrains him from political affairs and corruptions."\*\* Poets might have found examples in their own walk to justify a similar conclusion respecting what the child of the muses ought to desire. The ancients

\* Drexelius de Conformitate Human. Voluntatis cum Divin. lib. iv. 2.

† Pindar, Olymp. xii.

‡ Id. Pyth. Od. v.

|| Id. Pyth. Od. xii.

§ Id. Pyth. Od. iii.

\*\* Plato de Repub. lib. vi.



had instances before them, like that of Dante, who finished his sublime work while in exile, wandering and unhappy, through the different states of Italy.

The disputants in Plato's VIIth Book on Laws, agree in the opinion that the right and most happy life takes a middle course between pleasure and grief, neither pursuing the former nor avoiding the latter, but desiring the medium; and that all men should fly from the life of unmingled pleasure, as well as that of pain. Aristotle admits, that in sufferings the beautiful may shine forth, when any one bears great calamities with cheerfulness, not through insensibility, but through greatness of mind.\* And Plutarch lays it down as a criterion to determine what progress we make in virtue, to see whether we prefer mourning to festivity; or, to use his own words, whether we incline to excess in the Dorian harmony, which is grave and devout, or in the Lydian, which is gay and joyous. With respect to the ideas of the heroic world, if, on the one hand, the Homeric heroes speak of the gods having given them evils, and having ordained such things wishing them evil; on the other, the hero of Sophocles, Polynices, recognizes in his misfortunes the hand of an avenging deity;† and Archidamus, the Spartan king, proclaims adversity to be the school of virtue. "Let us not suppose," said he, "that there is any great difference between one man and another; but that he is the best who has been brought up in the greatest necessities."‡

Finally, let those who object to the Catholic view of suffering and penance, hear the remarkable words of Plato, explaining in what manner it may be often for the eternal advantage of men to choose mortification. "A person," saith he, "acting unjustly and escaping punishment and all suffering on account of his injustice, and congratulating himself upon such exemption, would be more miserable and deluded than a sick person who should rejoice in not undergoing the operation which alone could effect the cure of his body. In fine, the not receiving punishment for evil is the first and greatest of all calamities; so that if rhetoric be of any use to one who is unjust, it can only be by enabling him to expose fully and manfully his own injustice, in order that it may receive the proper punishment, whether of chains, or banishment, or death; that so his soul may be healed in the same manner as he would offer his limb to the knife or fire of the surgeon, in order to have it restored to soundness. Therefore each person should be his own accuser, and should beware of concealing his wickedness, and should employ all his rhetoric to this end, that he may be loosed from the greatest evil of injustice."§

But to return to the phenomena presented in the Christian life, we have observed, that in the restored and sanctified nature, during ages of faith, was discernible, not only this natural mourning from a sense of the sufferings of humanity; but also a mourning which may be termed of wisdom, as if belonging, of necessity, to all peculiar depth and penetration of mind. St. Thomas says, that the third beauty, or that of tears, answers to the gift of science; implying, that wisdom and philo-

\* Ethic. Nic. i. 10.

§ Plato Gorgias.

† Œd. Col. 1299.

‡ Thucyd. lib. i. c. 84.

sophy prepare us for sorrow. "The gift of science," says St. Augustin, "brings the third beatitude, *beati qui lugent*; for it enables men to learn the evils to which they are bound."\*

Many philosophers have remarked with Rhasis, that the finest wits and most generous spirits are before others obnoxious to melancholy: "*qui sunt subtilis ingenii et multæ perspicacitatis de facile incidunt in melancholiam*;" and one ancient author affirms that melancholy advanceth men's conceits more than any humour whatsoever.

The love of wisdom, indeed, is said in the unerring text, to dispel sadness like wine and music;† but yet we read in the same, that the heart of the wise is where is sadness. In fact, as St. Anselm remarks, "*quamvis delectabiles et dulces sint sapientia et dilectio, tamen in hujus vitæ lubrico generant dolorem et amaritudinem aliquando: quæ quanto veriores et majores sunt, tanto hoc faciunt rarius, et tanto gravius.*"‡ Albert Durer's celebrated design representing melancholy personified, shows a woman surrounded with the instruments of science, and occupied with its problems. Such was that sage of whom the poet says,

— "His aspirations  
Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,  
And they have only taught him what we know,  
That knowledge is not happiness, and science  
But an exchange of ignorance for that  
Which is another kind of ignorance."§

Yet, to the discerning and attentive eye, nature herself seemed to indicate mourning in characters that the wise could read. In some flowers, like that of the bean, Varro says, lugubrious letters are visible, and some suppose that it was on account of them the bean was forbidden food to the Pythagoreans. "Whither goest thou, grief?" say the Spaniards, "where I am wont;" and again they say, "when born I wept, and every day shows why."

"In the nations of the south," says Don Savedra, who could judge from long observation, "the men are melancholy and profound in penetrating the secrets of nature."§ But so it is with man; and his noble nature, undaunted by the prospect of sorrow, impels him no less to contemplate; and as the poet says, "while the same honour ceases to belong to the flowers of the spring, and the moon shines not with one unchanging countenance, he fatigues his lesser mind with eternal counsels."\*\* Hence, the rapid course of life afflicts the wise man more than others, "for who knows most, him loss of time most grieves." In the middle ages, the term sad was generally applied to every one who made profession of learning; for it was remembered then by all, that wisdom is not found in the land of those who live a sweet life.†† Without any indication of a troubled mind, a student might expect to have been often designated as was Hamlet by his mother: "But look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading." Painters would represent him making of one hand for his cheek a couch, with frequent sighs. Reading in the middle ages was not pursued as a light desultory amusement; it was the food of those thoughts that wander through eternity.

\* De Serm. Dom. in monte. † Eccles. xl. 20. ‡ S. Anselmi, Epist. lib. xi. 50.

§ Manfred, ii. § Christian Prince, ii. 380. \*\* Hor. Carm. lib. ii. 11. †† Job.

A French writer of great eminence has made the remark, that when nature bestows sublimity of genius, she accompanies it with that condition, "Be a great but an unhappy man." Religion herself held out no other prospect. "False prophets," says St. Jerome, "always promise sweet things, and please for a time. Truth is bitter, and they who preach it are filled with bitterness. In the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, the Pasch of the Lord is celebrated, and it is eaten with bitterness."\* Hence the shallow and ignoble sentence that "it is better sometimes to rejoice in error than always to grieve on account of truth." There was observable also, it has been said, the mourning of love; which, as St. Anselm says, "like wisdom not unfrequently generates in the present life bitterness and sorrow."† Plato said, that love and melancholy are near relations.‡ If one might venture to illustrate this theme, renewing the memory or custom of love-tuned song, I know indeed that full many piteous stories do remain from the period of these extraordinary ages when every aspiration of the human heart was often sanctified and pure. But it would be long and out of place to speak of those who, like Tancredie, had no other fault but love; which, by unadvised sight, had been

"Bred in the dangers of adventurous arms,  
And nurs'd with griefs, with sorrows, woes, and harms."

Since, of such love, it is not fitting here to speak, let us turn to a more fruitful source of mourning during the ages of faith, which will enable us to penetrate far deeper than we have hitherto done into their spirit and genius; for as yet we have but merely touched, as it were, upon the surface, and seen nought but what the history of men at all times might be found to supply.

---

### CHAPTER III.

"O thou Almighty Father! as angels of their will tender unto thee meet sacrifice, circling thy throne with loud hosannas; so may the offering of theirs be duly made to thee by saintly men on earth;" such was the prayer that rose incessantly to heaven wherever the catholic church had children, and these few words are sufficient to show with what spirit and conduct they regarded and received sorrow. The mourning of piety is a new and abundant theme, which to philosophers themselves, might be presented as one full of interest, and abounding in matter for observation and profound thought. Faith taught men the necessity for mourning, as a means of spiritual purification and of ascent to God. To the eye of faith the state of mourning was therefore a privi-

---

\* *Advers. Jovin. lib. ii.*

† *De Repub. lib. ix.*



leged and blessed state; and hence the priest, when about to celebrate the sacred mysteries, on taking the manipule uses this prayer: "Merear, Domine, portare manipulum fletus et doloris, ut cum exultatione recipiam mercedem laboris."

All writers of the spiritual life have shown, that those who are to be united to God must suffer many afflictions, internal as well as external, spiritual as well as sensible, in order that both parts may be perfectly purified; for, without such suffering and crosses, there cannot be the complete union and joy of the blessed.\* "The perfect," says St. John of the Cross, "have to pass through the night of the senses, the night of the spirit, the night of the memory, and the night of the will, which four nights represent the four kinds of mortification which they must endure. Because they are accepted of God—temptation must prove them." How wondrously conformable to the dictates of Divine wisdom was that maxim of Pythagoras,† where he said that "conquerors and those on whom leaves are thrown are polluted." Hence, no doubt the phenomenon which has so often elicited the remark which is found in even the ancient poet, that "the wicked are sometimes more fortunate than the good."‡ What examples were beheld in the calamities which befell St. Louis, René of Anjou, Count Elzéar de Sabran, St. Elizabeth, Henry VI. of England, many of the popes and other saintly personages during the middle ages. Those arms of the Braschi family, Boreas blowing on the rose, so symbolical of the life of the holy Pope Pius VI., might be adopted as a general emblem of the lot of goodness in this perverse world. The history of St. Francis Xavier furnishes a memorable instance. The king of Japan, who was converted by the preaching of the saint, had enjoyed the utmost prosperity while an idolater. No sooner did he renounce idolatry, and embrace the Christian faith, than it pleased God to visit him with all kinds of calamities. Two months after his baptism, his subjects rose against him and drove him from his throne. When the Gentiles reproached him with having changed his religion, and said that this was the cause of his misfortunes, he made a vow at the foot of the altar to live and die a Christian; adding, "that if all Japan and all Europe, if the fathers of the society and the Pope himself were to renounce Jesus Christ, that he would confess him to the last hour of his life; and that he would be always ready to shed his blood in testimony to his faith."§

Still more remarkable is the answer which St. Theresa made to a devout merchant from whom she had received an alms, and the events which followed in that man's life. "I have recommended you in my prayers as you desired," said she to him, "and it has been revealed to me, that your name is written in the book of life, and as a sign of the truth of what I say, you will never prosper again in your worldly affairs." So it turned out: his ships were successively wrecked and sunk; becoming unable to pay his debts, he was delivered from prison only through the esteem which his creditors entertained for his piety; and being thus stript of all worldly goods, but contented with the grace of

\* St. John of the Cross. The Ascent of Mount Carmel, the obscure night of the soul.

† Eurip. Helen. 1213.

Vol. II.—23

‡ Porphyrius de Vita Pythagoræ, xxxi.

§ Bouhours, Vie de St. F. Xavier, ii. 230.

God alone, he closed his days in the odour of sanctity ; thus disproving too the testimony of the Greek poet when he said, that “ the soul of the man who was once prosperous, when he falls into calamity, wanders over the past pleasures.”\* To facts of this kind, however, the holy fathers allude in words that denote how easy it was for men to misunderstand the phenomena. “ The winds,” say they, “ rise upon this ocean ; you behold the evil prospering and the good in distress. There is a temptation, there is a flood, and your soul saith, ‘ O God, God, is this thy justice, that the wicked should prosper and that the good should be in distress ? ’ and God will reply to you, ‘ Is this your faith ? Is this what I promised to you, or is it for this that you are a Christian, that you should prosper in this world ? ’ ”

“ Be not astonished,” says Louis of Blois, “ and murmur not against God. Refer to the scriptures ; there you will see how the devil was heard and the apostle not heard ! In what manner were the demons heard ? They sought leave to enter the swine, and leave was granted to them. The devil sought leave to tempt Job, and he received it. In what manner was the apostle not heard ? Thrice he besought the Lord that the cause of his suffering might be taken from him ; and his answer was, ‘ Sufficit tibi gratia mea, nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur.’ He heard him whom he intended to condemn, and he heard not him whom he wished to save.”†

As far as respects external calamities, reason itself can discern their utility. Heaven has many ways of conferring happiness, and adversity is one of them. This, no doubt, Pindar saw when he sung,

——— Πολλὰ δ' ὁδοὶ  
Σὺν θεοῖς εὐπραγίας.‡

“ It is in the nature of things,” says De Haller, “ and all history attests it, that a too long enjoyment of the highest fortune contains in itself the seeds of destruction, that by the softness, the luxury, and the indifference which are its usual results, it ends in enervating the most vigorous races, and in extinguishing that force of soul, along with which all other goods of the earth are lost.” If this was often true in reference even to the interests of the present life, much more frequently was it so with regard to the more important concern of the soul’s health and condition for eternity. The deep sense which men entertained of this fact during the ages of faith, has given rise to a tone in their whole literature, which has often struck the modern readers, who are constrained to admire the imperturbable resignation with which the most unforeseen and dreadful calamities were endured. The page of history is often suddenly illuminated with bright examples of this kind, which seldom fail to charm even the most insensible : and certainly the contrast which is presented in this respect by our annals to the whole of heathen literature, must excite a surprise not unmixed with the highest pleasure. The ancient poets seem never to have conceived the idea of a spirit of resignation and sacrifice, which would soften and sanctify calamity. Hecuba becomes impious in her misfortune, and says, that to call upon the gods is to invoke evil allies, though it may have a certain form of propriety to

\* Eurip. Troades, 640. † Ludovic. Blosii Tractat. in Ps. lxxxv. ‡ Olymp. viii.

appeal to them in misfortune.\* In the poet's mind it was impossible that any feeling but that of the utmost horror could be excited in the breast of one who, having been the mother of Hector, might now in her misfortunes and subjection, be doomed to guard the keys of the gate, or to prepare food.† It is easy to see what an advantage the poet of the middle ages would have had here in following the common inspiration of religion. In fact, there is nothing more remarkable in their whole history and literature, than the astonishing change which Christianity had wrought in the hearts and understanding of men with regard to the contemplation or experience of misfortune. "When Fouquet's mother heard of the arrest of her son, she threw herself on her knees," says the Abbé de Choisy, "and raised up her hands to heaven. 'I thank you, O my God,' she cried, 'I have always prayed to you for his salvation, and lo, here is the way opened!'" Catharine, queen of England, used to say, that she would rather have adverse than prosperous fortune, for that the former never wanted consolation; whereas, in the latter, both mind and judgment were often wanting.

When the venerable Mother de Chantal came to Moulins, she had much conversation with the Duchess de Montmorency, who was there residing in the convent of the Visitation. The holy woman expressed her joy that the duchess should have made such good use of her misfortunes. "My misfortunes," replied Madame de Montmorency, "have not been the sole cause of my retreat: I have always felt an indifference for the world, even when I was at the court. My misfortunes found me in this disposition, and I have received them as means granted by God, to enable me to fulfil the wish of my early youth, to live in retreat, unknown, and without other care, but that of my salvation. I have endeavoured to place myself in this state, and I have lived now for many years as you see me in this house, hoping that Heaven will have pity upon me."‡

The chief of modern bards who, in tales of prose, without a rival stands, has chosen for matter of his song, the wisdom and peace of a blessed mourner contrasted with the sadness of one who judged with the world's mind, where he describes the meeting of Bruce and his royal sister, the Abbess Isabel, in her Convent of St. Bride:

"The Bruce survey'd the humble cell,  
And this is thine, poor Isabel!  
That pallet-couch, and naked wall,  
For room of state, and bed of pall;  
For costly robes and jewels rare,  
A string of beads and zone of hair;  
And for the trumpet's sprightly call  
To sport or banquet, grove or hall,  
The bell's grim voice divides thy care,  
'Twixt hours of penitence and prayer!

The noble abbess consoles him respecting his past misfortunes, adding,

"And grieve not that on Pleasure's stream,  
No more I drive in giddy dream,  
For Heaven the erring pilot knew,  
And from the gulf the vessel drew.  
Tried me with judgments, stern and great,  
My house's ruin, thy defeat,

---

\* Eurip. Troades, 473. † Ibid. 494. ‡ Marsollier, Vie de Mde. Chantal, ii. 1810.



Poor Nigel's death; till, tamed, I own  
 My hopes are fix'd on heaven alone;  
 Nor e'er shall earthly prospects win  
 My heart to this vain world of sin."

Finally, she sends her reply to Lord Ronald, who knew not of her having taken the veil—

"This answer be to Ronald given:  
 The heart he asks is fix'd on heaven.  
 My love was like a summer-flower,  
 That wither'd in the wintry hour;  
 Born but of vanity and pride,  
 And with these sunny visions died.  
 Brother, for little space, farewell!  
 To other duties warns the bell."

Then follows the lament of the worldly heart—

"Lost to the world, King Robert said,  
 When he had left the royal maid—  
 Lost to the world, by lot severe—  
 Oh! what a gem lies buried here;  
 Nipp'd by misfortune's cruel frost,  
 The buds of fair affection lost."

Would you observe the same resignation in the mourning of heroes? When the master of Santiago beheld his forces overwhelmed by the Moors on the mountains of Malaga, his cry was, "O, Lord of Hosts! from thy wrath do I fly, not from these infidels; they are but instruments in thy hands, to chastise us for our sins!" "This defeat," says one of the devout historians of Spain, "was to teach them, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but that God alone giveth the victory;" and Father Antonio Agapida asserts it to be a punishment for the avarice of the Spanish warriors, who were intent upon spoil. It is the same spirit in the Saxon Chronicle, where it describes the dreadful pestilence and famine which desolated England in the year 1087, concluding with this reflection, "Alas! how wretched and how rueful a time was there! Who is so hard-hearted as not to weep at such misfortunes? Yet such things happen for men's sins—they will not love God and justice." While recording the temper and views with which sufferings were borne by St. Louis, by Alfred, and by many other heroic and saintly kings of the middle ages, history is constrained to assume a tone of sanctity which is strangely at variance with its generally profane character. Sometimes the details are very attractive: as those relating to that affecting scene which was presented at the Council of Rheims, in which Pope Innocent presided, and before which St. Bernard preached. Philip, the eldest son of King Louis-le-Gros, had lately met with a tragic death by an accident; and the King was now proceeding to Rheims to have his second son crowned, but the loss of the former had overwhelmed him with affliction. The King, Queen and young Prince, attended by the Abbot Suger, and by the whole court, arrived in that city on the 23d of October. The next day the King came to the council, followed by a crowd of nobles, and leaning on the shoulder of Raoul, Count de Vermandois, Grand Sénéchal of France,

\* Lord of the Isles, iv.

like a man oppressed with sadness; he mounted into the Pope's tribune, and after kissing his feet, sat down in a chair, which was a little lower than that of his Holiness. He spoke of the death of his son in few words, which drew tears from the eyes of all present; at every word he spake his tears flowed fast, and all the bitterness of his heart appeared in his countenance. The Pope replied before the council—"Great King, you must raise your mind and all your thoughts to the King of kings, to adore his judgments, and receive with perfect submission the events of his Divine Providence. It is he who has placed the crown of France upon your head; it is by his will that you command this noble and generous nation; but he requires you to believe that every thing occurs by his permission, for it is not a blind divinity which can be ignorant of any thing that passes here below; and though there are often great injustices, these events are always just on his part, and the effects either of his justice or of his mercy. You know, great Prince, that prosperity and adversity are the ordinary means which he employs in conducting his children; and this alternative, which he sheds on the whole course of our life, is an effect of his highest wisdom, in order that man may not attach himself to the figure of this world which passes away, lest, if he were always prosperous, he might forget that this is a place of exile, and that all our vows and desires should tend to the celestial Jerusalem. We have no secure dwelling in this world: we are only like travellers, who pass on, and who proceed to their country, which is Heaven. Then, all who have lived according to the spirit, and who have mortified their passions, will reign with God, in the possession of eternal happiness. Your son has been taken, while he was yet in simplicity and innocence; and the kingdom of heaven is particularly destined for those whom the corruption of the world hath not infected. Consider how David ceased to mourn as soon as his son was dead, and how he wisely submitted to the ordinance of Heaven. I conjure you, then, to moderate this excessive grief, and to banish this overwhelming sadness, which appears on your countenance, and which arises only from an affliction which is a little too human. Remember that Heaven has left you other sons. It is for you to console us strangers, driven from our country, and become, as it were, wanderers from land to land. You have already done so, in a manner worthy of your piety. You are the first of the Christian Princes to whom we are indebted for hospitality. May Heaven recompense you as you deserve, and crown you with an everlasting happiness, and a happy life, which will be no more subject to death, and a holy joy, which no sorrow shall ever more disturb." With these words the Pope arose, and absolved the soul of the deceased Prince; and then the council was adjourned till the next day. The King appeared consoled. The discourse of the Holy Father had made an impression on his understanding and on his heart. He retired, in great peace, to the Abbey of St. Remy, where he had taken up his lodging.

The sages of the cloister kept men mindful of the end for which all human felicity is chequered with sorrow. I remember once, while spending some days in a certain monastery, where I was received with wondrous benignity, that one venerable Father, of great age, used to come to my chamber every evening, when he would converse with me

for a short time. "Our sovereign," he said to me one night, "who is beloved by all his subjects as a pious, just, and amiable prince, has no son. Ah! see how the condition of man, in his best estate, has always some dark side, in order to remind him that his true country is not in this world. Again, with respect to ourselves, what a happy land is our beloved country—what an industrious innocent people! During thirty-seven years that I have lived in this forest, no deed of violence has ever been committed. What a combination of blessings do we enjoy? A wise, humane government; no national debt; no want of freedom; a delicious climate; a fertile soil! Such is our state to-day; but when our sovereign dies,—dies without an heir,—what is to be our fate? This only we know for certain, that bliss may not remain long with mortals,—that here we have no abiding home, that here is nothing secure—nothing durable." To cite instances of misfortune having been the means of conferring great spiritual good, would be an unnecessary task; but yet there is one example in the history of France so remarkable, so associated with themes that should be dear and precious, that I cannot pass on without first attending to it. Pélisson, confined in a dungeon in the Bastille, applied himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers, and became convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion. He and La Fontaine, who was wholly depending upon patronage, were the two young men who came forward to defend Fouquet, the moment he was thrown into prison and proscribed, when all his creatures and all the courtiers abandoned him. Pélisson, from the Bastille, sent forth Discourses in his favour, which have been compared with those of Cicero: he left nothing untried to help his friend—"le premier entre les généreux." Poetry, eloquence, glory, religion, even menaces, were employed to move the king. Perhaps, if it were lawful to indulge in such speculations, it was for this noble virtue, that Pélisson was rewarded by conversion, and La Fontaine by the gift of repentance. The former, from this happy moment, abandoned his former trivial compositions, and wrote no more, except for God and his Church. As he had neither paper, pens, nor ink, he used to cut off little pieces of the lead casement with which he used to write down his thoughts. While in prison, many learned persons dedicated their works to him. Nothing could disturb the tranquillity of his soul, for mourning had enabled him to view every object from the height of faith. One of his Odes was written during a great storm, in the Bastille:—"Rude and terrible blast, thou only assaultest my prison; while on the sea, how much greater cause of fear! Celestial faith, whose ardour elevates and inflames me; thou teachest me that this weak body is nothing but the dwelling of my soul. Others may well fear a cruel shipwreck. Rude and terrible blast, thou only assaultest my prison." Another Ode is addressed to the sun:—"I behold thee, O Sun! advancing with royal splendour; but another object, greater than thee, occupies all my thoughts: I feel it; it is in my heart; before it, thy splendid beams grow pale, and thy light resembles a shadow. By it I live; by it thou runnest thy course, and bringest night and day. Depart, O Sun! whither thou art summoned; I have no regard, no discourse, excepting for its immortal light." Again:—"Rise, my soul, above the earth, and above the pride of profane mortals. Contemplate the saints, whose long fervour, imitating the labour of the heavenly



Saviour, sustains their spirit of celestial hopes." Again;—"The example of Godeau has inspired me with the desire of consecrating my genius and my voice to God. I behold a thousand learned men, whose verses have power to reign over kings, and to give to their names a deathless renown. Mortals, who possess this precious gift, too long have ye flattered the princes of the earth; begin at length to praise the Monarch of Heaven." Again:—"Sweet nightingales, who return every year to sing in these groves, consecrate your charming voices to the glory of God, who has endowed you with them. Bright flowers of the fresh season! do not present yourselves to my sight—you render the earth too lovely: I wish to love only heaven." Again:—"Double bars, with bolts unnumbered—triple gates, strongly locked, to souls truly wicked, you represent hell!—but to innocent souls, you are only wood, stone, and iron." Upon his deliverance from the Bastile, after some delay, in consequence of hearing of the intended promotion which awaited him, he, at length, embraced the Catholic religion, in the subterraneous church of Chartres, in the year 1670. The same day, he wrote an affecting letter to the King; and on the following, retired to the Abbey of La Trappe, and remained there during ten days, leading the life of a holy anchorite: his piety affected every beholder. Ever afterwards, he was in habits of hearing mass daily,—of receiving the communion on all festivals,—of making frequent retreats,—of delivering some prisoners every year: he was the father of orphans, and the protector of the weak: he made considerable presents to several churches, chiefly to mark his veneration for the mystery of the eucharist. Amongst others, he gave a silver lamp, weighing two thousand pounds, to the Sisters of the Visitation, to burn night and day before the blessed sacrament. "Happy captivity!" cried Fenelon, alluding to him in the discourse which he pronounced on entering the French Academy, "Happy captivity! salutary bonds! which reduced, under the yoke of faith, this mind, too long independent. During this period of leisure, he sought in tradition for arms to combat truth; but truth conquered him, and revealed itself to his soul, with all its charms. He left his prison, honoured with the esteem and graces of his King; but, what is much more, he left it, being already in his heart, a humble child of the Church."\*

Of the necessity for mourning in the spiritual life, men were well convinced in the ages of faith; but its source was far deeper and more mysterious than the mere present utility which resulted from it to the soul. "Augustin and Jerome belong to these latter ages of the world," says a philosopher, in casting a glance over the history of the human mind. "One discovers in them an order of ideas, and a manner of thinking, unknown to antiquity. Christianity has made a cord to vibrate in their hearts which till then had been mute. It has created men of reverie, of sadness, of disgust, of restlessness, who have no refuge but in eternity."—"The present life is sweet, and full of much pleasure;

---

\* He wrote "*Réflexions sur les Différends de la Religion*," which Leibnitz pronounced an admirable work; also, "*Traité de l'Eucharistie*," in which Bossuet said, "That charity was joined to truth, and that unction was added to light: it contained prayers, which he had composed for use during mass; which are so fine, that Father Judde can find none more suitable to insert in his book of instructions." Tom. iii. 330.

yet not to all men, but to those only who are attached to it." It is St. Chrysostom who speaks thus:—"For if any one were to look up to heaven, and contemplate what wondrous things are there, immediately he would despise this world, and esteem it of no value. The beauty of bodies, so long as no greater beauty is discerned, excites admiration; but if any thing more excellent were to appear, the former would be despised. And if we should wish to behold that beauty, and to consider the form of the celestial kingdom, we should thenceforth be loosed from the bonds of this world."\* "O quam sordet terra," cries a great saint. "quando cælum aspicio!" And so says St. Augustin, after conversing with his mother, Monica, at Ostia, on the beatitude of the saints in Heaven, "Mundus iste nobis viluerat cum omnibus delectationibus suis."—"The bonds of this world," he says, in another place, "have a true asperity and a false sweetness, a sure grief, an uncertain pleasure, hard labour, timid rest, things full of misery, and a hope void of happiness."† Thus, "Not alone the creature groaneth and travaileth in pain, but also they who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan within themselves, expecting the adoption of the sons of God;"‡ "He who does not mourn as a stranger," says St. Augustin, "will never rejoice as a citizen."§ The holy Church, in her prayer to God, says, that his people labour under continual tribulations.¶ Let us proceed to inquire what were these tribulations which faith recognized as the legitimate source of a mourning that is blessed. In the first place, then, we are told, by writers of the middle ages, that when the soul is awakened to a sense of spiritual things, the mere contemplation of its fallen state is a worthy cause for sorrow and for profound mourning. Hear the words of St. Vincentius, in his celebrated tract on the contemplation of God:—"O Lord! thou art my God and my Lord; and I have never seen thee. Thou hast made and restored me, and all that I possess of good, thou hast granted to me, and I have not yet known thee. For seeing thee I was created, and I have not fulfilled that for which I was created. O, miserable lot of man, when he lost that for which he was created! O, hard and dire calamity! Alas! what lost he, and what found he? What departed, and what remained? He lost beatitude, for which he was made; and he found misery, for which he was not made. That departed, without which nothing is happy; and that remained, which, of itself, is only wretchedness. Man used to eat the bread of angels, for which he now hungers; and now he eats the bread of sorrow, of which he once knew nothing. Alas! the common grief of men, the universal woe of the children of Adam! driven from their sweet country, from the pleasant light, from the vision of God, from the bliss of immortality into darkness, and the bitterness and horror of death, amerced of heaven, and from eternal splendours flung."\*\* Hear, again, how St. Bernard speaks, in his first Sermon on the Epiphany:—"The benignity and humanity of God our Saviour hath appeared, thanks be to God, by whom thus abounds our consolation in this pilgrimage, in this exile, in this misery. For this end we are the more careful often to admonish you that you may never forget how you are pilgrims, far

\* Hom. cc. in Joan.

† Epist. 30.

‡ Rom. viii.

¶ Tract. in Ps. 148.

§ 3d feria, Fourth Week in Lent.

\*\* Tract. S. Vincentii ad contempl. Deum.

removed from your country, driven from your inheritance; for, whoever does not know desolation, cannot acknowledge comfort; whoever is ignorant that consolation is necessary, it remains that he be left without the grace of God. Hence it is that men, who are engaged in the occupations and crimes of the world, while they do not perceive their misery, do not look for mercy. But you, to whom it hath not been said in vain, 'Be still, and see how sweet is the Lord;' and of whom the same Prophet says, 'He will announce the virtue of his works to his people,'—you, I say, whom secular affairs do not detain, are able to know what is spiritual consolation: 'Hearken! you who have known exile, because assistance is come from Heaven: for the benignity and humanity of God our Saviour hath appeared.'"—"There is a certain kind of tribulation," says Louis of Blois, "which we ought to seek and find; that which results from remembering that we are not as yet with God, that we are surrounded with temptations, that we cannot be without fear. He who does not experience this tribulation of his pilgrimage, thinks not about returning to his country."\* "The weight of sin," says a holy friar of the Seraphic Order of St. Francis, "is only felt when it is out of its centre. Water and earth are heavy; and yet, when they are in their proper place, they are both without weight. Thus it is with sinners. They are as joyous as if they had never done any thing but served God, and led a life of innocence. The reason is, that sin reposes in them as in its proper element; but let them forsake it, and then they will soon discover that its weight is intolerable."† Reason itself can discern this, as may be seen with Seneca, who puts this difference between the sickness of the body and that of the mind; that with respect to sickness of body, the greater it is the more painful; but in diseases of the mind, the greater they are, the less they are felt and complained of.‡ Then, indeed, deceitful is the calm, so deceitful the silence, that even a heathen philosopher says, that the guardian angels speak not to all souls; for when men struggle in the waves of the sea, those on the shore behold in silence as many as are at a distance from the land irremediably lost, but run and succour, with their hands and with their cries, as many as are approaching the land; so these ministering spirits suffer in silence such as are sinking afar off in the flood of wickedness, but sustain and guide to a happy port those who are struggling to practise virtue.—That the first recovery from sin is attended by a sense of sorrow, is shown by St. Bernard, in language of wondrous sublimity:—"Lazarus is dead four days, and now stinketh. This answereth," he continues, "to the state of sinners. The first day is that in which we die by sin, and are, as it were, buried in our consciences; the second represents that temptation of evil habits, and those fiery darts of the devil, which can scarcely be extinguished; the third is, while we meditate on our past years, in bitterness of heart, and yet labour not so much to avoid future sins, as we deplore what we have already committed. These are days of burial, days of clouds and darkness, days of sorrow and bitterness. Next follows the day of shame, not unlike the other three, when the wretched soul is covered with horrible confusion, while it considers what it hath lost, and revolves black

\* Tractat. in Ps. 49.  
Vol. II.—24

† Le Sacré Mont d'Olivet. 136.  
Q 2

‡ In Sentent.



images of sins before the eyes of its heart. In this state the soul dissembles nothing, but judges and aggravates all things, spares not itself, but is its own stern judge. Nevertheless, Lazarus, come forth! Delay no longer in this abomination, in this despair, which is like putrefaction; Lazarus, come forth! abyss calls upon abyss. The abyss of light and mercy upon the abyss of misery and darkness. Lazarus, come forth!"\* In no stage of the spiritual life was the mourning consequent upon the sense of sin excluded. Thus, Paschasius Radbert mentions the soliloquy of his friend, the holy abbot Wala, who said, on one occasion, "Why does he appear so sorrowful, as he walks alone? Because he is with himself, and he discerns what is within himself; and therefore he has no joy excepting what springs from hope."†

The infant new born is not exempt from sin. "Hence," says Origen, "we find, in the sacred history, no personage of distinguished sanctity, who regarded the day of his birth as a day of festival and rejoicing."‡ It was to complete the triumph of a birth-day feast, that the holy John the Baptist was martyred.|| Birth-days were not celebrated in the middle ages, but men rejoiced on the festival of their respective patrons. The Church guided them in this judgment, for she did not rejoice on the day of man's creation, which is the sixth. It soon became unhappy; "But admire the mystery," adds Bossuet: "the day when the first man, Adam, was created, is the same as that on which the new man, the new Adam, died upon the cross. It is, therefore, for the Church, a day of fasting and of mourning—a day which is followed by the sad repose of Jesus Christ in the sepulchre, and which, nevertheless, is full of consolation, by hope of a future resurrection." The Church does not even celebrate the nativity of the saints. "What is this, brethren?" asks St. Augustin, alluding to St. Cyprian. "We know not when this saint was born, and yet we celebrate his birth on this day, which was the day of his passion. But even if we did know the day of his birth, we would not celebrate it, for on that day he was born in sin." These sentiments were universally adopted during the ages of faith. "The day of birth," says Michael Angelo, in a letter to Vasari, "ought not to be celebrated with festivals; they should be kept for the death of the man who has lived virtuously."

Protestantism was a soil in which every weed or plant of the ancient heathen life was able to revive and strike root, precisely because the supernatural influence of faith was withdrawn, and the observance of birth-days in the ancient style, on the anniversary of which men would render honours to Bacchus, like the Pagans,§ furnishes a remarkable example. Sometimes they would celebrate their birth-day as a religious festival. Heriot, who founded a hospital at Edinburgh, in the statutes of his foundation ordered his birth-day to be kept solemnly, and himself to be on that day commemorated in his chapel; and the minister who officiated was to receive five pounds and a bible, which day the Presbyterians continued to celebrate, though they had abolished Christ's

\* In Assumptione B. Mariæ, Serm. iv.

† Vita ejus apud Mabill. Acta S. Ordinis Benedict. Sæcul. iv., pars. i.

‡ Hom. Levit. viii. 3.

|| Matt. xiv. 6.

§ Eurip. Io. 1137.

birth-day, and the festivals of God's saints. With the moderns, the associations of the natural were stronger than those of the supernatural life, or rather, the latter were entirely abandoned: and here we shall do well to remark the difference in regard to real cheerfulness between the festivities of the middle ages, and those of our times: the former were designed to commemorate a glorious and happy triumph, in which no image was seen but what had connection with life, and everlasting gladness; the latter to please men whose hopes extend not beyond the present life, where they place all their happiness, have for subject of rejoicing, an event which is fraught with the gloomy idea of change, of departed youth, and of by-gone years, and of death approaching with rapid step, beyond which this pompous festivity of nature has nothing to promise. So true is it, that even the rejoicings of the world are full of its sadness and bitterness. But it was not only a sense of their own condition that could inspire men of spiritual life with mourning; a regard for the eternal lot of other men, and of humanity in general, would have conduced to it no less. "Consider the multitude and the greatness of the miseries which oppress children," says St. Augustin, "and how the first years of their life are full of vanity and suffering, illusions, and fear. Then when they grow up, and begin to serve God, error tempts them to their seduction; labour and sorrow tempt to other discouragement; concupiscence tempts them to inflame their passions; pride tempts them to exalt themselves; and who can find words to represent the various pains which belong to the yoke of the children of Adam;"\* hence another source of mourning to the just, in the consideration of the evils which are in the world, and of the obstacles which the perverse wills of men present to the beneficent designs of God. "Signa tua in frontibus virorum lugentium," says Ezechiel. "See how good it is to mourn for evils," adds St. Odo, of Cluny, "since it makes men worthy of receiving the stigmata of the cross."† "The soul of a true Christian," says Louis of Blois, "ought, after the example of Jesus Christ, to feel a profound sadness in considering the great number of men who not only do not honour God, but whose impiety despises him, and who lose themselves by sin. How is it possible without grief to behold the ruin of such noble creatures?"‡

———"O ye misguided souls!  
Infatuate, who from such a good estrange  
Your hearts, and bend your gaze on vanity,  
Alas for you!"||

And here I am tempted to borrow a similitude from history, which may place this matter in a stronger light than could be derived from mere discourse of reason; for what must have been the desolation of those few Syracusans, who, as Thucydides relates, believed Hermocrates, and feared for the future, when all the rest of the people were divided, some affirming that the Athenians would in no manner come, and that what was said could not be true; and others, that if they did come it would be to their own greater loss; and others, wholly despising the news, turned the matter to a jest and laughter.§ We have here an

\* S. Augustini cont. Julian. lib. iv. 16.

† S. Odonis Collat. lib. ii. Bibliothec. Cluniac.

‡ Dante, Parad. ix.

§ Institut. Spiritual. cap. vi.

Lib. vi. 35.

emblem of what passes in the world at all times with regard to the predicted vengeance of Heaven; and can it be strange that the insensibility of the majority of men, should fill the hearts of the prudent with mourning and dismay? How can they not mourn when they behold men at variance with the truth, who, as Dante says,—

“Dream, though their eyes be open; reckless some  
Of error: others well aware they err,  
To whom more guilt and shame are justly due.  
Each the known track of sage philosophy  
Deserts, and has a by-way of his own:  
So much the restless eagerness to shine  
And love of singularity prevail.”\*

Alas, in every age the desolation caused by heresy has afflicted the hearts of the faithful. In the fifth century, we are told that so great and innumerable were the horrors of heresy, that not only it was difficult to enumerate, but that it was disgusting to name them. The subtlety of diabolic fraud had so immersed them in the sense of those who perish, that even heretics believed that they had their heretics. Thus men abandoned apostolical tradition, and followed masters of perfidy.† If this were true in the fifth age, what must have been the mourning in that which beheld the commencement of the last great schism, when Christ’s holy Church, her divine faith, and her tremendous mysteries, were in so many places “disglorified, blasphemed, and had in scorn by the rebellious rout amidst their wine?” “Truly,” says the mild and humble Louis of Blois, “when I consider the arrogance and impiety of the heretics of our age, I can scarcely refrain from tears: for they will not obey the Church; they refuse to be subject to its superiors; they esteem as nothing the primacy of the chief Pontiff, who is the supreme vicar of Christ; they petulantly insult the Apostolic See: followers of a monstrous confusion, and revilers of the divine ordination, they wish the visible Church to be without a visible head on earth; they abolish and deride the solitary sacramental confession; heaps of blasphemies against the sacred eucharist, that fountain of divine love and of all good, and against that celestial sacrifice of the mass, I say against that mystery of ineffable dignity, they produce with a barbaric and pagan irreverence.”‡

To make no mention as yet of those persecutions, which must be spoken of in reference to a different beatitude from what we are now considering, sorrow was unavoidable on a view of the injury inflicted on the Church by the conduct of false disciples. Alas! there has been no age in which this was not a fruitful source of mourning to the just. “We have internal as well as external combats,” says St. Boniface, writing to the bishop Daniel, describing his missionary labours in Saxony, “as when some priest or deacon of the Church departs from the faith and from truth. Tunc deinde prorumpit cum paganis in contumelias filiorum Ecclesiæ, et est obstaculum horrendum evangelio gloriæ Christi.”|| St. Francis Xavier found that the greatest obstacle to the

\* Parad. xxix.

† Consultatio Zachæi Christiani et Apollonii Philosophi, lib. xi. cap. 11. Apud Dacherii Spicileg. tom. x. ‡ Ludovic. Blosii Collyr. Hæreticorum, lib. ii. cap. 1.  
|| S. Bonif. Mart. et Archiep. Epist. iii.



establishment of the faith in the great kingdoms of Asia, came from the Christians themselves—those false, worldly-wise Christians, who protest against fanaticism.\* The love of gain induced some of the richest Portuguese merchants at Sancier to put a stop to the intended voyage of St. Francis Xavier to China—for they said that no doubt the governor of Canton would revenge his boldness upon them by seizing their ships and goods.† Wherever there were eminent piety and service, there was reason to expect the enmity and attacks of men professing virtue, who would argue upon the dangers of excess of zeal. A fearful example of this fact is attested on the sides of the Rocky Hall, which served for refectory to the monks of St. Benedict at San Cosimato, where is painted the miraculous preservation of the blessed Father St. Benedict from poison. There are always persons to whom the common dictates of piety seem like the ravings of fanaticism. Catharine de Medicis termed it bigotry to desire that the theatres should be closed in Lent.‡ Plato says that if a man judges well, he will be of opinion that there are few men very good or very wicked, τοὺς δὲ μεταξύ πλείστους.|| No doubt, this continued to be the case even in happier times; and it is no less certain, that from those persons who profess and desire to remain in a medium state, the most afflicting embarrassments proceed, which present obstacles to the advancement of truth, the extension of happiness, and the greater glory of God. According to the circumstances of men does the enemy lay his snares; and thus he labours to inspire those who are within the pale,—where none perish by a false belief,—with a secret hate and disrelish for their own brethren, and with a corresponding inclination to esteem their adversaries. St. Peter the Venerable, the fourth abbot of Cluny, was accused by some of the monks of Clairvaux of not following the rule to which he was bound,—of composing laws himself, and of casting aside the precepts of the Fathers,—of breaking the vows which he had made to St. Benedict, and of despising the authority of Bishops in the government of his abbey,—of being too severe and too merciful.§ Without looking farther into this dark volume, methinks here was enough to make many say with Hesiod, that it would be better to die than to have lived to know of such things.

Moreover, if we reflect upon the influence of the Catholic religion upon the human mind, and upon the new relation in which it places men with regard to the events and circumstances of the world, we shall easily understand why Catholics, even during the ages of greatest faith, should have mourned more than other men: for, being imbued by their divine religion with the principles and the love of order, they necessarily feel more intensely the disorders introduced by sin into human society. Having the knowledge of truth, the prevalence of error,—which they know to be such,—must unavoidably fill them with more affliction; and having to maintain positive principles, which are unceasingly attacked by the power of darkness, their life, in an intellectual as well as in a moral sense, becomes a continued combat. The moderns, on the other hand, from being imbued with no principles or love of order, are consequently indifferent to the reign of confusion and disorder. Having

\* Bonhours, Vie de S. F. X. I. 138.

† Journal de Hen. III. 3. p. 180.    || Phædo.

‡ Id. ii. 8.

§ S. Pet. Ven. Epist. lib. i. 28.

no certain apprehension of truth, they are not grieved at the support which is given to a thousand errors, all of which, for any thing they know to the contrary, may be truths, since, from their own highest authority, there may be always an appeal to the suggestions of every man's own mind; and, having no decided ground to maintain, it matters little to them what principles men choose to attack, for they feel an interest in none. They can immediately shift their position as an opponent advances, for they place their glory in believing that there may be equal truth in opposite systems,—so they stretch out their hands to all fraternal nullities, and lay claim to the favour of all men alike. Humanly speaking, therefore, they have fewer intellectual causes for mourning than those of the faithful fold; who cannot but feel disorder and recognise error, and stand to meet the enemy, whose momentary victories they can never celebrate as their own. If to this consideration we add the effects of the new relation in which Catholicism places many men with regard to the circumstances of the world, we shall discern still further reason for the mourning of the just. Ah! how must he mourn, in lands which heresy has devastated, whose eyes are suddenly awakened to the divine light of heavenly truth, enabling him to judge rightly for the first time of the character of past events, which before, perhaps, had been the theme of his pride and rejoicing. When led by grace divine to hear the old instructors, their sanctity so wins upon him, that while kings and penal laws pursue them, he mixes his tears with their's, and has thence no desire left on earth but still to succour them. What must be his bitterness, to whom the accumulated woes and horrors of more than three centuries are presented suddenly, in all their nakedness and terror! In an instant, all that ideal of beauty and excellence, which his mind had so long nourished, perishes, and he beholds in its place revealed the secrets of Heaven's vengeance. "Wretched man!" with hand against his breast he cries, "in what blindness hast thou hitherto lived! The friends and martyrs of God thou didst esteem fools, and their life and death without honour; the cruel persecutors, the unjust judges, the base and hypocritical ministers of tyranny, have had all thy esteem: the sorrows of the just have been unknown to thee; their holy discipline thou didst despise. Alas! thou hast misconstrued every thing. Who then can wonder at thy tears and desolation? the burden of many ages on thee light at once, by thy retrospect reviving to torment thee with the thought that they have been."

With regard to themselves, too assuredly such men are not long in discovering, that there is a woe reserved which will affect them personally in the nearest and dearest affections of their heart; for, from the hour that they declare openly for the Church of Christ in opposition to the profane city and to the innumerable sects of false religions which are made subservient to its interests, calumny, suspicion deep, and hatred, will be directed against them. They are but just converted; and see already how their ancient friend, perhaps their brother, doth begin to make them strangers to his looks of love. "*Extraneus factus sum fratribus meis,*" we may hear them mournfully sing; "*et peregrinus filiis matris meæ.*"\* There will not be wanting, perhaps, even in

---

\* Psalm lxxviii.

the circle of those who once appeared most to esteem them, persons grave and seeming holy, who will traduce them in the minds of men,

“Blighting their life in best of its career,  
Branding their thoughts as things to shun and fear.”

Moreover, to Catholics, who desire that the glory of the Creator should be extended over the whole earth, and who feel for the calamities of the most distant members of the city of God as intensely as for those of the persons nearest to them, the course of human events of itself presents a more tragic and melancholy aspect than to inconsiderate and selfish men, who care for nothing but what immediately concerns their own interest. What an affecting description do we find in the chronicles of the middle ages, of the mourning in which all Europe was plunged, whenever any calamitous intelligence came from the East! It was in the reign of Henry VI. that the news arrived at Crowland Abbey of the fall of Constantinople, that most celebrated Christian city. “Woe to us Christians who have sinned,” exclaims upon this occasion the monk of Crowland. “Why, O Lord, were we born to behold with weeping eyes the desolation of our people and the affliction of our sacred religion? The patriarchal seats, worthy of such veneration,—Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem,—are oppressed with the yoke of slavery or occupied by Saracens and Turks. Christianity is reduced as if into an angle of the world!”\* The fall of Jerusalem, the profanation of the holy city, the loss of the holy sepulchre, the sufferings of the chivalry of Palestine, the calamities to which all the Christians of the East would be subject,—these were reflections which turned into houses of mourning every castle and every cottage in France and England. “*Vox turturis, vox doloris et gemitus fines Christianorum usque ad mundi ultima lamentabili novitate rumoris perculit*,” says Godfrey the monk.† When to this common grief was added the pastoral solicitude for the Church, the mourning exceeded the endurance of mortals. Pope Urban III. died of grief on hearing at Ferrara of the fall of Jerusalem. Nicholas V. never recovered from the melancholy which seized him on hearing of the capture of Constantinople by the Turks; and Clement IX. died of grief in consequence of the capture of Candia by the infidels.

But we have not yet glanced at the most mysterious and yet most general cause for the mourning of the devout heart during the ages of faith. The master of the sentences says of holy men, “that in contemplating the great event of the death of Christ, they both rejoice and mourn.” “*De eodem ergo lætabantur et tristabantur*.”‡

“Religion,” says a philosopher, “involves infinite mourning. In order to love God, (he means not with love of preference, but with affection) he must require help. How wondrously is this problem solved in Christianity!”§ Hear how St. Theresa speaks: “The pains of death have encompassed me,” said the royal prophet, speaking in the name of Christ, “O what a dreadful evil is sin, when it can cause such pain and even death to a God! Christians, now you are called

\* Hist. Croylandensis, 529, in *Rerum Anglicarum Scriptor.* tom. i.

† Godefrid. Monach. ap. Freher. Script. tom. i. p. 250.

‡ Petri Lomb. lib. i. Distinct. xlviii.

§ Novalis Schriften ii. 305.



upon to fight in defence of your King. Now you must follow him in this great desertion. There remains to him but a very small number of subjects, and the crowd follows the standard of Satan; and some who wish to be styled his friends in public, betray him in secret, and there is hardly any one left in whom he can perfectly confide! O thou only true friend, what ingratitude in him who betrays thee! O ye who are true Christians, weep with your God: the tears which he shed were not for Lazarus alone; but also for all those whom he foresaw would refuse to rise when he should cry to them with a loud voice commanding them to come forth from the tomb.”\* Here then was a source of mourning in comparison with which all other afflictions were unworthy of mention; for,

————— “Upon such a shrine,  
What are our petty griefs? Let no man number his.”

“Suffer me to be an imitator of the passion of my God,” says St. Ignatius the Martyr in his epistle to the Romans. What an amazing and sublime rule is that which St. Bonaventura proposes as the first fruit of meditating on the passion of Christ, that the highest and most perfect religion, the rule of all perfection of life and virtue, consists in imitating the passion and death of Christ, and endeavouring to be conformable to him in all his sufferings.† “Abhorreo videre cor meum non vulneratum,” saith he, “cum videam te Salvatorem sic pro me vilissimæ cruci affixum. Nolo enim, Domine, sine vulnere vivere, quia te video vulneratum.”‡

So the Church prays, “that we who celebrate the mysteries of our Lord’s passion may imitate what we commemorate.”|| “The ascent of the soul by wisdom from the passion is in this manner,” says St. Bonaventura, “when a man considers that most blessed passion which I am not worthy to name, in which He of almighty power was trampled upon for us, He, of infinite wisdom, treated as a fool, and He, the best and highest, filled with bitterness and condemned to a shameful death, from this the mind rises to an admiration of such divine condescension and benignity; and then, when it masticates that passion of its Lord Jesus, all the ardour of its love begins to be directed towards him; it feels a taste of a certain ineffable sweetness, and its appetite is, as it were, appeased with bitterness. The whole interior of man is thus alienated from itself, and rests in Christ. O mira et sæculis res inaudita! In ineffabili amaritudine, dulcor indicibilis reperitur.§ Nay,” continues this seraphic doctor, “in mourning, men fulfill all the virtues to which beatitude is promised.”—“The splendour of the beatitudes shines forth in the blessed passion of our Lord, which is properly their fountain and origin. For who is poor in spirit unless Christ naked upon the cross? Who is meek unless he who was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and who, as a lamb, opened not his mouth? Who mourns, unless he who, with a great cry and tears, offered up supplications for his enemies, who lamented for our sins, and had compassion on our miseries? Who hungered and thirsted after justice unless Christ upon the cross, satisfying for our sins and thirsting after the salvation of

\* Exclamat. x.

† Id. cap. 2.

‡ S. Bonaventur. Stimul. Amoris. pars. i. cap. 4.

|| Secret. 2d Septemb.

§ Stim. Amoris, pars i. cap. 7.

souls? Who is merciful unless that Samaritan who bore our infirmities upon his own body? Where is cleanness of heart seen unless in him who cleansed our hearts with his precious blood? Who is pacific, unless he who is our peace, and hath reconciled us to God in his blood? Who suffers persecution for sake of justice, unless he who was crucified by the Jews, against whom men blasphemed and bore lying testimony?"\*

The writers of the middle ages say, "that the heart which loves God is overwhelmed with affliction at the thought of having ever preferred the vain joys of the world to the sweetness of present sorrow, that it mourns and despises itself for having ceased to mourn, that it mourns for having left the cross to go to the house of merriment. True," say they, "our sweet adorable Lord went to grace with his presence the marriage feast: he would even contribute to its hilarity and assist the poverty of the bridegroom; but all the while he knew that he himself was advancing to his passion; that his repose was to be the bloody cross, and his feast the vinegar and gall. O divine Jesus! how hard is it for one who loves thee to seek for joy. It is permitted him. Yes, thou smilest upon his youth and biddest him be happy and holy; but ah! he would follow thee to that dread garden where thou wert betrayed, he would follow thee to weep and knock the breast, and to kiss thy bleeding wounds; he would remain at thy sepulchre weeping with the holy women. My sweet adorable Saviour is in agony, and do you bid me join the rout of revellers? he is betrayed and condemned, and do you bid me rejoice with the world which rejected him? O no; better is it to remain apart and pour forth pitying tears with holy Mary, the queen of heaven and mistress of the world, who stood by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, full of sadness! Happy senses of the blessed Virgin Mary," exclaims the Church, "which, without dying, deserved the palm of martyrdom beneath the cross of our Lord."† Ah suffer me to mourn with her, tear me not away from this cross, from this tomb:

*"Eia mater, fons amoris, me sentire vim doloris:*

*Fac ut tecum lugeam.*

*Fac me vere tecum flere, crucifixo condolere*

*Donec ego vixero."*

Wounded with these strokes, inebriated with this blood, may I be guarded by the cross, and delivered by the death of Christ.

"Perish the joys that would separate me from those who mourn; perish the honours, the triumph, that would require smiles not tears, rejoicing, not mourning. Ah, for a little while I was enticed to join the mirthful crew, and my soul was filled with a different kind of bitterness. It seemed as if I had been condemned to mourn no more with the just, condemned never more to make one of those who sing the pathetic "*stabat mater*," the "*inviolata*," or "*salve Regina*," or "*vexilla Regis*," and that seemed equivalent to the sadness and the whole weight of sin and death. O with what transport did I hail my first sweet returning tears; and how was my spirit dissolved in an ecstasy of delight, when I found that I might become again a mourner, and lose the memory of ungrateful joy.

\* *Stim. Amoris*, pars i. cap. 8.

VOL. II.—25

† *Commun. fest. of the 7 dolours.*

Flow fast my tears, flow fast for my having wished to banish ye, for my having forgotten and betrayed my infant Saviour, my despised Saviour, my crucified Saviour. What joy is comparable to the sweetness of these tears? Certainly not the world's joy; not for all that it can offer would I ever again exchange them. Only Paradise, only the blessed face of Christ, only the ineffable beatific vision of God in his eternal glory can make my soul forget them." They are the expressions of mourners, but the foretaste of heaven; belonging to earth, but never to be wiped from the eyes of those who aspire after innocence, till the day of glory comes, that day of joy which shall never end.

Here we are naturally directed to inquire respecting those penitential exercises of which we find such repeated mention in the history of the ages of faith; for we must already have touched at the source from which they sprung, and this is a subject which belongs intimately to the history of ancient manners.

#### CHAPTER IV.

THAT the spirit of mortification, of self-sacrifice, and of penance belonged to the mourning of the faithful, is manifest from what has been already seen respecting the order of their life and the natural desire of their hearts; but independent of incidental causes, it was of necessity characteristic of the Christian discipline, in consequence of the express requisition of God, and of the positive advantages which resulted from it in the progress to spiritual perfection. The words of Christ admitted of no exceptions, "*Abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam quotidie.*"\* "What is the question," asks Tertullian, "you are anxious to know—if your penance will be useful to you or not before God? What does it matter? God commands you to do it; is not that enough to oblige you to obey him? When there should be nothing but the respect which is due to his authority, he deserves that you should have regard to him in preference to your own utility."† The command is without exception. The vessel of election was not dispensed from this law, and hence we read "*Castigo corpus meum.*"‡ David who sinned had no escape, though he was the man after God's own heart. It was penance which rendered him so, as St. Ambrose intimates. "*Peccavit David,*" says he, "*quod solent Reges: sed pœnitentiam gessit, flevit, ingemuit, quod non solent Reges.*"|| Cause some find for doubt in that the Pagans have been known to practise austerities with the view of appeasing their deities; but reason and tradition have enabled men in all ages to discern some truths, and if the consent of philosophers were a proof against a

\* S. Luc. ix. 23.

† De Pœnitent.

‡ Epist. ad Corinth. i. cap. 9.

|| Lib. de Apolog. David.



practice or a doctrine, there would be few points of Christian discipline, or faith secure. Besides there is a wide distinction to be observed here. There have been superstitions among the heathens, which induced their votaries to practise mortifications beyond which human nature cannot attain; but as Bourdaloue remarks, "the difference between Christians and the followers of Pagan severity consisted in this, that while these men mortified their flesh, they abandoned their minds to all the impulses of passion. Whereas the mortification of Christians was chiefly that of the heart, as a means to reform and purify it."\* Otherwise, it was of no avail, insomuch that in relation to men who were truly contrite or truly inflamed with the love of God, the opinion of Fichte, at least in one sense, was correct, that for them there was no longer any self-denial; no longer any sacrifices; for the self which is to be denied, the objects which are to be sacrificed, have been removed from their sphere of vision, and estranged from their affections. This denial, these sacrifices, can only excite wonder in those who continue to value the objects of them, and who have not yet given them up; when once they are given up, they vanish into nothing, and we find that we have lost nothing. The holy Fathers universally maintain the vanity of all corporal austerities, unless the mind and heart be corrected.

"Beware," says St. Jerome, "lest your fasts become a source of pride. You fast, and ill-humour makes you insupportable: another does not fast, and he is gentle to all the world. You lose by your vices the fruit of your mortification."† In what used to be styled the dark ages, St. Columban reminds his monks of the same distinction. "Do not suppose," saith he, "that it is enough to fatigue the dust of our bodies with fasts and watchings, if we do not also reform our manners. To macerate the flesh, if the soul does not fructify, is to till the ground without ceasing, and never to reap fruit from it. What signifies it to carry on a distant war, if the interior be a prey to ruin? A religion, all of gestures and movements of the body, is vain. The suffering of the body alone is vain; the care which man takes of his exterior is vain, if he do not also watch and preserve his soul. True piety consists in humility, not of the body, but of the heart. It is not enough to speak and read about virtues. Is it with words alone that a man cleanseth his house of filth? Can any work be accomplished without labour? Gird up your loins, then, and never cease to combat."‡ Besides, after all, it is quite clear that the Christian spirit of self-sacrifice was unknown to the Pagans, and in vain shall we look for it in the scenes which recall the most renowned deeds of their heroic devotion. When we are led to expect an instance of this pure and noble spirit, it is rather a calculation of evils, and the choice of the least, which gives rise to the apparent offering. Thus, it is not until after a long examination of the indignities which await her, if she continue to live, that Macharia, in Euripides, resolves to embrace death. It is better to die, she concludes, than to suffer such things; § and, in like manner, in the Iphigenia, in Aulis, the spirit of the victim is completely opposite to that of sacrifice in the

\* Serm. sur la Sévérité Chrétienne.

† S. Hieronym. Epist. ad Eustoch. Virg.

‡ S. Instit. ii. Bibliothec. Patrum, tom. xii. cap. 10.

§ Heraclid. 524.

Christian sense. "What is the marriage of Paris and Helen to me? It is the sweetest of all things to behold the light"—

——— *μυίνεται δ', ὅς εὐχεται*  
*θανεῖν' κακῶς ζῆν κρείσσον, ἢ θανεῖν καλῶς.\**

So also Polyxena consents to die; but it is because she perceives that longer life would not be to her advantage, since she has lost the dignity of her ancestral rank, and all her hopes of being married to a king, since she is now a slave, a humiliation to which she is not accustomed, and in her situation it is a much more happy thing to die than to live, for to live not in honour is the greatest misery.† The *Antigona*, of Sophocles, presents, indeed, an instance of very high sentiment, but then it is mixed with hatred and contempt for the unjust decree of the tyrant, who has presumed to meddle in what concerns him not, the discharge of her domestic duties.‡ But, say the Protestants, is not the indulgence in the spirit of sacrifice and mortification, and is not the whole doctrine of penance an injury to the atonement, and a rejection of the grace of God? And besides this, surely, to use the words of Fichte, "The voice of philosophy does not call upon us to mortify ourselves: O, no; it calls upon us to cast away that which affords no enjoyment; that when we have done so, that which is a teeming source of endless enjoyment, may come and take possession of our souls?" The voice of philosophy, to reply in brief, has, no doubt, often pronounced things very sweet in comparison with the bitterness of truth. Its error here does not consist in an over fine spinning of truth. It is essentially an error. The voice of God, whatever that of philosophy may say, calls upon men to mortify their corrupt nature upon earth, and to take up their cross daily; and, with respect to the theological argument, it is quite a sufficient answer, that, if it were valid, Christ himself would not have required self-mortification in the words above cited, nor would his Apostles have practised it. It would be more to the purpose to inquire respecting what has been transmitted by the voice of the ancient Fathers, than concerning the affirmations of philosophy; though Calvin might say, "he was not moved by what was every where found in the writings of the ancients on satisfaction."|| "Dominus orandus est," says St. Cyprian, "Dominus nostra satisfactione placandus est. Qui sic Deo satisfecerit—lætam faciet ecclesiam, nec jam solam Dei veniam merebitur, sed coronam,"§ To the like effect speak Tertullian, St. Ambrose, and all the holy fathers, as may be seen at length in Sardagna, or any other dogmatical theologian.\*\* St. Augustin expressly says, "That it is not sufficient to change our manners for the better, and to depart from evil, unless we satisfy God, by penance, for the things which we have done, by the sacrifice of a contrite heart, with alms co-operating."†† That man should be called to suffer, does not derogate, as the modern sects pretend, from the merits of Christ, in whom, as the Council of Trent observes, is all our glory, and in whom we satisfy God's justice."‡‡ Though original sin has been remitted, man still suffers temporal death. Do they think it would be fair to conclude, from this fact, that the satisfaction of Christ was not full and abundant? Mortal sin is forgiven, and yet temporal

\* 1237.

† Hecuba, 340.

† 48.

|| Instit. lib. iii. c. 4. § 38.

§ Tract. de Lapsis.

\*\* Tom. viii.

†† Serm. cccli.

‡‡ Sess. xiv. cap. 8.

penalty is exacted by God. Adam was pardoned, and yet condemned to die. Moses and Aaron were pardoned,\* and yet punished, by not being permitted to enter the land of promise. David was pardoned,† and yet to punish him his son was condemned to die. St. Augustin draws the conclusion;‡ and the holy fathers, on similar ground, press the necessity for penance, to avert the punishment of God.§ Remission of temporal punishment is gratuitous, although man is to give satisfaction, because it is the free gift of God which enables his works to be satisfactory through Christ, and because these works are themselves the fruit of Divine grace. Our satisfactions are the means by which the price of redemption is applied to us; and this is a point which ought to present no difficulties to the Protestants, who admit that, without faith, the merits of Christ are not applied, although their value is independent of it.

All theologians firmly believed, and clearly taught, that the satisfaction of Christ was sufficient, as far as price, to expiate all the sins of men, and that the private works of satisfaction were not required to supply any defect in that price, but on account of the reasons thus explained by the Council of Trent:—"It becomes the Divine clemency, that our sins should not be remitted to us without some satisfaction; lest, taking occasion from lighter sins, we should fall into greater, becoming contumelious to the Holy Spirit, treasuring up wrath to ourselves against the day of wrath. Without doubt, these satisfactory penalties recall men powerfully from sin, restrain them as if with a bridle, and make them more cautious and vigilant; heal the wounds of former sins, and of former vicious habits. In addition to this, by suffering for sin, we are made conformable to Jesus Christ, who satisfied for us—*ex quo omnis nostra sufficientia est*; and we have a pledge, that if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified along with him."§ St. Ambrose says, "That he has heard of persons who deny the merit of abstinence and fasting, and continence," whom he refutes, by reminding them of the sentences of St. Paul; and then he adds, "*Qui non castigant corpus suum, et volunt prædicare aliis, ipsi reprobi habentur.*"\*\* The advantages derived from mortification of the senses, were clearly discerned during the ages of faith. The wisdom of God explains why mortification should be good for man—"Quoniam in igne probatur aurum et argentum, homines vero acceptabiles in camino humiliationis."†† There is a pain which purges and purifies, and a pain which consumes and devours: this last is the portion of the wicked. Pain, without penance, is the fire of hell. "Woe to the heretics," cries St. Ephrem, "who say there is no such thing as penance. They deserve to be likened to those insane men who say there is no God; for to say that there is no God, or to annihilate his mercy by saying that there are no remedies able to cure the wounds of weak unassisted men, are one and the same thing. On the other hand, I grant to you, that there is no such thing as penance; but I mean for those who abuse

\* Num. 20.

† Reg. 12, 13.

‡ In Ps. l.

§ Tertull. de Pœnitent. 4. S. Cyprian. de Lapsis. St. Jerome in Joëlem. S. Chrysostom. Hom 41. ad. pop. Antioch.

§ Vide La Hogue Tractat. de Incarnatione, 92. Sardagna de Satisfactione. Theolog. tom. viii. p. 217.

\*\* Epist. lib. x. 82.

†† Ecclus. c. 2. 5



penance, that they may sin, for this is to mock God.”\* “O divine clemency,” exclaims Basil, bishop of Seleucia, “to what a dignity does penitence attain! Men weep and God is changed; mortals lament, and the immortal decree is cancelled!”† The reason of the early philosophers and the judgment of the ancients generally, pointed out to them the advantages of mortification. The Pythagoreans observed abstinence from flesh as conducive to purity of mind, health of body, and promptitude of understanding.‡ Aurelian, the Emperor, ascribed his constant health to a custom of abstaining one day in every month from food and drink. Augustus Cæsar was remarkable for his abstinence, as Suetonius relates. Plato adopted an austere life. Hermodius arrived at the age of an hundred, Democritus and Hippocrates at that of an hundred and five, by a life of abstinence. Drexelius mentions, as among the many fruits of fasting, “The rendering serene all the senses, external and internal;”|| so the Church, in her prayer at the beginning of Lent, speaks of “This solemn fast, which is a wholesome institution, to heal both our souls and bodies.” In the primitive Church, fasts were entitled stations. “Our fasts are camps to us,” says St. Ambrose, “which defend us from diabolic attacks; and they are called stations, because, standing in them, we repel our enemy.” How remarkable are the following words of the sacred text, “Jejunium nescit fœneratorem, non sortem fœneris novit: non redolet usuras mensa jejunantium.”§ In the history of the middle ages, we have this sentence illustrated; for it was not so common then, as in modern times, to witness the fall and ruin of ancient and noble houses, to hear of their being stript of their ancestral domains, or become the spoil of usurers. The spirit of the Catholic discipline, which they observed, was unacquainted with the terms mortgage and interest; and we find, in consequence, that patrimonial estates were retained through a long succession of ages. St. Basil the Great, says, “That all the saints have rendered their lives worthy by fasting.”\*\* All the most holy and approved persons that we read of in the sacred pages, Moses, Elias, Juditha, Esther, Sarah, Job, Tobias, Esdras, David, Ezekiel, are expressly recorded to have fasted. Daniel fed on pulse, and wisdom gained. In the new law, our Saviour Christ set us an example. St. Paul, Barnabas, Simon, Lucius, and other followers of Paul, were in many fastings. St. Gregory Nazianzen says, “That St. Peter almost always fasted, and ate only beans.” St. Matthew, as St. Clemens Alexandrinus testifies, lived upon herbs and roots. It is recorded of St. James the Greater, of St. James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem, and of St. John, that they always abstained from flesh meat. Honey and locusts were the food of the Precursor in the Wilderness; and Hegesippus relates, “That the first Christians were taught to abstain, by the blessed Marc Pontif, of Alexandria.” Passing on to later ages, we find Theodosius the Younger accustoming himself to fast twice every week, and to abstain from wine in Lent, Charlemagne fasting even to the risk of injuring his health, Otho the Great, making his whole army observe a fast, before giving battle to the Hungarians, Lothaire, King of

\* S. Ephrem. Tractat. de Pœnitentia.

† Jamblic. de Pathagoric. Vita, cap. 16.

§ Judith, cap. 1, 2.

‡ Basil Sentent. or 12.

|| Hier. Drexelius de Jejunio, lib. ii. cap. 5.

\*\* De Laude Jejunii.

the Franks, continuing to observe a fast during a dangerous illness, and the Emperor Ferdinand I. adopting a rule of great abstinence after the death of his excellent wife. Of the abstinence and self-control of Rodolph the Emperor, history relates an heroic instance; for being on an expedition with his army, and oppressed with thirst, a vessel of water, which a peasant was carrying, was immediately seized upon, and brought to him as a great treasure; but he ordered it to be restored to the peasant, untouched, saying, "I thirst not for myself, but for my army."\*

In a future place, when I shall come to speak of the festivals and seasons of the Church, it will be necessary to return to this subject, and describe at more length, the manners of the middle ages, in relation to the ecclesiastical law of fasting and abstinence. Solemn public penance, instituted on occasion of the Novatian heresy, which accused the Church of being too indulgent in receiving back sinners, was abrogated earlier in the Greek than in the Western Church. In the latter, it ceased with the seventh century, when alms, pilgrimages, and confinement in monasteries, were substituted for it, which alteration is, by some, ascribed to Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was a Greek. The ancient severity, however, did not begin to be relaxed until after the eleventh century. In the times of greatest fervour, the discipline of the Church respecting the greatness and duration of penance was never invariable. Each age, each province, had its customs. In one place, public penance was reserved for very few crimes; in another it was required for a greater number. The same sins were not punished with equal rigour, but much depended upon the local judicature. Universally, however, the fundamental parts of penance were the same; so that the objection advanced by heretics, against the use of the word penance, is a mere quarrel about words. That a change of mind was requisite, every one knew without having studied Greek, or heard their pedantic eloquence.

The first thing required in penance was the ordination of the mind to God: but, says St. Thomas, "the mind cannot duly be converted to God without charity."† And elsewhere he says, "Omnes virtutes participant aliquid de charitate."‡ And St. Bernard says, "Charity converts the soul."§ Hence, St. Augustin says, that unless the Holy Spirit should make man a lover of God, he will not be transferred from the left hand to the right.¶ It would require but a slight acquaintance with the history of religion to be able to detect the error of those modern writers, who, speaking of such men as the Count of Anjou, apply the term "miserable" to the penitents of the middle ages. If penitents,—in the sense in which the word was then used,—no men were less miserable. Assuredly it was not an unhappy state for man, born the child of wrath, and fallen from baptismal innocence, to be dismissed from the sacred tribunals as were Adam and Eve from Paradise,

"Sent forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace."

It was in allusion to spirits far more grievously afflicted, though resembling these penitents of earth, that the great poet of the ages of faith exclaimed,

\* Drexelius de Jejunio, lib. i. c. 3.

† Lib. iv. cont. Gentes, cap. 72.

‡ In iii. Dist. 26. art. 2.

§ De diligendo Deo, 12.

§ De Trinitate, lib. xv. 18.

———"O spirits! secure,  
Whene'er the time may be, of peaceful end!"\*

And of whom he elsewhere says,

"He show'd me many others, one by one:  
And all, as they were nam'd, seem'd well content,  
For no dark gesture I discern'd in any."†

In the air and countenance of one of these penitents of the middle ages, if suddenly one of them could be introduced into a circle of the most refined modern society, there would be nothing to strike the attention as remarkable, excepting, perhaps, a more than ordinary gentleness and dignity. Hear how St. Jerome describes Asella: "Nothing can be milder than her severity, nothing more severe than her mildness; nothing more melancholy than her sweetness, nothing sweeter than her melancholy. Her figure denotes mortification without the least parade; her words are like silence, and her silence has words: her exterior is always the same; her dress exhibits nothing refined or curious; her ornaments consist in their plainness. The good speak of her with admiration, and the wicked dare not attack her. Let the priests of the Lord, on beholding her, be filled with profound veneration."‡

In the ages of greatest fervour, a due and rational attention to health was never excluded in the most austere discipline of penitents. St. Jerome, in condemning immoderate fasts and austerities, quotes the saying of the seven sages of Greece,—"Nothing too much;" and declares it to be as wise and just a maxim as it is celebrated.¶ St. Bonaventura mentions that the blessed St. Francis would never suffer his friars to injure their health by too much severity. Experience, indeed, would here suffice. St. Hilarion lived to the age of eighty-four; St. Augustin and St. Jerome, Paphnutius, Macarius and St. Francis de Paul, lived to ninety; St. Anthony to one hundred, Udalricus, Bishop of Padua, to one hundred and five; St. Simeon Stylites to one hundred and ten; St. Paul the Hermit to one hundred and thirteen; Arsenius and Romualdus to one hundred and twenty years: and all, after a life of rigid abstinence and fasting. Hear how St. Chrysostom writes to Olympias: "Neither the rigour of winter nor the weakness of my health, should inspire you with any fear. The winter, though as severe as in Armenia, and that is to say every thing, does not incommode me to excess, for we have taken measures against it, and we neglect nothing to secure us from its inconveniences. For that purpose we keep up a good fire—we carefully exclude the external air from our apartment—we cover ourselves with many clothes; and, as a last resource, we keep within doors. After my example, venerable Olympias, attend to your health; I conjure you, I ask it of you as a grace. Direct all your attention to keep off infirmities. Remember too, that sadness can cause infirmities. Think of the misery of those whose body is worn down by sickness, and reduced to such a state that they can no longer enjoy either the seasons or the things needful to life. I implore you then to procure the assistance of the most skilful physicians, and to apply the

\* Dante, *Purg.* xxvi.  
¶ *Epist.* ad Demetriad.

† *Id.* xxiv.

‡ St. Hieronym. *Epist.* ad Marcellam.



proper remedies to deliver you from these maladies.”\*—“If some should come and say to you not to fast, lest you should be made weak, do not believe them nor listen to them,” says St. Athanasius, “for by them the enemy suggests this. Remember what is written,—that when the three children and Daniel, and the other captive youths, were led by the King of Babylon, and commanded to eat of his table, and they refused, and did eat only of the seeds of the earth, that, after ten days, when introduced into the presence of the king, their faces, instead of being squalid, appeared more beautiful than those of the others who had been fed at the royal table. See then,” continues this great saint, “that fasting does not produce what you dread. It cures diseases, it dries up the humours of the body; it puts the demon to flight; it expels bad thoughts; it renders the mind clearer, the heart purer, the body holier; and, in short, it raises man to the throne of God.”

Finally: in the Father of the Scholastic Theology, we find the same counsels of prudence and moderation:—“Injure not your health,” says St. Anselm. “*Melius est enim ut cum salute corporis, læto animo aliquid faciat, quam per ægritudinem ab his quæ cum lætitiâ bene facitis, deficiatis.*”† Thus, those extravagant and gloomy images of penance, which some men associate with the remembrance of the scholastic-romantic ages, have, in general, no other foundation but the fancy of poets and the misrepresentation of the adversaries of the holy Church.

But let us on; our length of way admonishes to speed, and we have to mark other instances of mortification and penance, as connected with the character of those who mourned with effectual grief. To speak of the ordinary exercises which were recommended by the universal consent of the spiritually wise, would be long and needless. In this respect, the manners of the middle ages present nothing remarkable, excepting the fervour and sincerity with which the discipline of a penitential life was observed by men in every class of society. Behold that race of mourners, all downward lying, prone upon the ground, and weeping sore. These are the elect of God, in whom repentant tears mature that blessed hour, when they shall find absolution from the holy Church, and with Heaven acceptance. “My soul hath cleaved to the dust,” you hear with such deep sighs uttered, that they well nigh choke the words. But let us pass on to view still more remarkable fruits of penance, undertaken by contrite sinners, some of whose voluntary penal woes are well calculated to excite our astonishment. Genebaud, Bishop of Laon, penetrated with a sense of the sinfulness of his conduct in having yielded to a foul temptation, sent to entreat St. Remi to come to Laon, at whose feet he prostrated himself, and confessed his fault. To repair the public scandal of his fall, the bishop shut himself up in a dark cell, more like a tomb than the abode of a living man, and there he passed seven years in prayer and fasting, tears and watching. During this time, St. Remi undertook the charge of his diocese, and at its expiration, he restored him to his episcopal see.‡ In the year 582, St. Hospice, a recluse, shut himself up in a tower to do penance, near a celebrated monastery at Nice, in Provence. In that tower he lived a long

\* Letter to Olympius.

† S. Anselmi Epist. cl. ad Goffrid.

‡ Anquetil, *Hist. de Rheim*, lib. i. 50.

time till his death. Celebrated also was the example of Dominick Loricat, or the Cuirassed, a renowned penitent at the end of the tenth century, so called because he wore next the skin a coat of mail, which he used to lay aside only for the discipline. The extraordinary austerities of this man furnished a striking lesson to the rude warriors who knew him, of the heinousness of sin. But as they were accustomed to a life of every kind of hardship, a moderate penance would have been counted for nothing: or rather, it would have seemed to them like a recognition of the lightness of sin. Some modern writers, who profess to philosophize, express the utmost astonishment at meeting with such acts of mortification in a religion which lays claim to peace and blessed charity: but such amaze will not be long the inmate of a thoughtful breast. If it had been evinced in ages of faith, they who expressed it would have been referred for solution to the Gospel which is read on the first Sunday of that solemn season, when the Church sings "*Creator alme siderum,*" and reminds men of the coming of our Lord to judgment; and of those dread words, "*And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the just unto life eternal.*"—"What will be the tribunal of the Judge," cries St. Augustin, "when the cradle of the infant terrified proud kings."\* Who can think of the day of his coming? and who will stand to behold him? At that tremendous hour of last judgment, when, as St. Ephrem says, "the priest will be separated from the priest, the bishop from the bishop, the father from the son, the daughter from the mother,—when the reprobate, cast off from before the face of God, will find themselves alone, deprived of all assistance, abandoned even by hope,—when they will cry, 'O how could we lose in indifference the time that was given us! What shall we do? Alas! we can no longer do penance! The time is past. No more shall we see the innumerable legions of angels and saints, no more shall we contemplate that true light which enlightens the abode of the blessed! Behold us here isolated, rejected, far from God, far from joy. Farewell, ye just; farewell, apostles, prophets, martyrs. Farewell, all ye that are happy and holy!'"†

These were the considerations which moved men with such force to do penance seriously; for they said with St. Augustin, "If man wished to punish himself, God would spare him. Sit oportet ipse severus in se, ut in eum sit misericors Deus."‡

Hear how St. Odo, the abbot of Cluny, speaks of the danger of sin; and consider what an impression such words must have made upon the simple, profound, and susceptible minds of men in the middle ages. "Adam once sinned, and is dead. If you therefore should sin, expect not to be spared. If any one could have been spared, it would have been Adam, who was new-made, tender, and rude, and who had before known no sin;—but as for you who wish to sin after the Law, after the Prophets, after the Gospel, after the Apostles,—what hope can there be of indulgence?"||

There is one remarkable characteristic of the middle ages, which we should constantly bear in mind whenever we institute a comparison be-

\* Serm. ii. de Epiph.

† Serm. lxxii.

‡ S. August. Serm. cclxxviii.

|| S. Odonis, Abb. Clun. ii. Collation. lib. ii. Bibliothec. Cluniac.

tween them and our own times, in relation either to literature, art, or religion,—it is, that these things were all taken seriously, taken in earnest. While hearing the moderns converse on subjects of religious truth, one might expect every moment that some of them would have sufficient acuteness and consistency as to propose a question like that of Callicles to Socrates, who, after hearing his noble statement of the evil of sin, consisting in its nature rather than in its punishment, exclaims, “O Socrates, tell us whether you say these things seriously or only in jest, for if you are serious, and it be really true what you now say, without doubt it follows that our whole life is perverse, and that we do all things exactly contrary to what we ought.”\*

In the middle ages, it is true men did not seem to believe that the way to heaven was precisely the broadest and easiest that presented itself to the senses; they were impressed with the idea that their souls could not be saved without retirement, meditation and occasional renouncement of lawful pleasures; many of the penitential austerities were no doubt great; but who can hear without trembling what St. Gregory says, “that more men perish by means of false penance than by impenitence itself;” and after this, who can feel inclined to criticise the penitents of ages of faith? It is not, however, to be denied, but that occasionally the spirit of human severity may have mixed itself with the austerity of penance, so as to have occasioned great and grievous abuse. When the passions of men are strong, they are sometimes fearful even in the deeds which spring from virtuous sources; and the facts of ancient history are not to be concealed because some men in modern times have chosen to exaggerate and pervert them thoughtlessly, or for malignant purposes. The horrible tale professing to reveal the secrets of monastic penance in the middle ages, which the genius of a modern bard has rendered so familiar, contains abundant internal evidence, that the author wrote from vague and general report, and without having ever studied the subject which he pretended to illustrate. Who that has read the rules of the blessed St. Benedict, breathing nothing but seraphic love and sanctity, will not lift up his hands in astonishment, on hearing that account of the judgment pronounced upon Constance de Beverly in the abbey of Lindisfarn, where the three Heads of houses are feigned to have sat for horrible doom:

“All servants of Saint Benedict,  
The statutes of whose order strict  
On iron table lay!”

As if that holy book gave them authority to commit the barbarous deed which imparts such a horrible intent to this narrative.

How grave and moral writers can be guilty of this strange readiness to admit and propagate slanders against the saintly and illustrious dead, I know not, nor is it necessary for us here to inquire. What we have to do is to examine the real facts which may have originally suggested the idea of this celebrated romance; and no one need shrink from such an investigation, through a tenderness for the character of former times, for it is no reproach peculiar to any age, that some men should have been found in it, who were without prudence or without charity. The

---

\* Plat. Gorgias.



first mention of a penitential prison for guilty monks, occurs in the writings of St. John Climachus, who was abbot of Mt. Sinai, at the end of the sixth century. St. Benedict, who lived before this book of St. John Climachus had appeared, prescribed in his rule various modes of correction for monks who offended, but he makes no mention of a prison; although in the XVIIIth chapter, he enumerates accurately all the precautions and punishments to be used before expelling a monk as incorrigible. "But," says Mabillon, in his treatise on the Monastic prisons, "the hardness of some abbots in subsequent times, was carried to such an excess, that they mutilated the limbs of some monks who were guilty of great crimes, so that the monks obtained from Charlemagne, an especial decree for their protection. All the abbots being assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle, in 817, ordered that in each monastery there should be a retired house, *domus semota*, for the guilty, a chamber with a fire-place and an anti-chamber for work. This was ordained by all the abbots of the empire, France, Germany, and Italy. It was in subsequent times that Matthew Prior of St. Martin-des-Champs, according to the report of Peter the Venerable, invented a fearful kind of prison which was without light, and destined for those who were to be perpetually confined, and it was called the *Vade in Pace*. The abbot was guilty of this excess through his extravagant severity and hatred of sin; but he inflicted it upon only one criminal monk. Stephen, Archbishop of Toulouse, complained of these inventions to king John, "*de horribili rigore quem monachi exercebant adversus monachos graviter peccantes.*" This led to measures of prevention in future; Mabillon expresses his astonishment at such inhumanity in monks, who ought to be models of all gentleness and compassion; but it should be remembered how rare and isolated were such instances in the long succession of ages; how solitary they stand in history, and unconnected with any part of monastic discipline; and that after all, the immunities of the religious, who were not subject to the civil power, made some provision for the punishment of great offenders absolutely necessary. As for the story of Constance, it is utterly defective in regard to history, inasmuch as the extension of such penalties to communities of women is a mere invention; and even if the author had adhered to limits within which he would have had some foundation, the unwarranted assertions, to use the gentlest expression, which are woven through the whole tissue of his poem, would, to any reader of moderate instruction, have destroyed all colouring of truth. This Matthew Prior of St. Martin-des-Champs, to whom he is so greatly indebted, was not to mankind but to sin a foe; ignorant it is true, but justifying no poet in the conclusion that he had retired into the cloister "for desprite and envy;" or "that he joyed in doing ill." The whole abuse is to be ascribed to the extravagant zeal of some well-meaning men in times of great severity of principles; and we find that there was no obstacle or delay in providing against it effectual remedies.

## CHAPTER V.

WE have already seen some of the works of mourning which were substituted for the solemn public penance of the ancient canons ; but that which in a literary or poetical point of view, is the most interesting of these works, remains to be considered, which consisted in the pilgrimages either expressly prescribed or voluntarily undertaken for the correction of passions and the expiation of sins. Of the former, some were imposed for great offences as a more severe penalty than that which was enacted against them by the civil laws. Men who had committed homicide were ordered to go on pilgrimage to various holy places in foreign lands, bound all the while with iron chains, for in these ages capital punishment was rarely inflicted. These chains were worn round the neck and also on both arms ; sometimes the pilgrims deserved to be freed from them, and then they were freed in the church.\* The four miserable knights who murdered St. Thomas at Canterbury, after long wanderings, were enjoined to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and there to live as penitential converts on the black mountain. Some were to be condemned to pass the whole remainder of their lives on pilgrimage. Such were degraded priests who should have discovered the secret of confession. "*Deponatur, et omnibus diebus vitæ suæ ignominiosè peregrinando pergat.*" We read of others who were never to remain more than one night in the same place.

At Rheims disputes and combats between the citizens, used generally to be terminated by the sheriffs, and the most usual penalty inflicted was a pilgrimage. The persons condemned were to set out on a fixed day, and to remain in the town indicated during three, six, or twelve months, and to bring back authentic certificates. It was generally a pilgrimage to St. James in Galicia, to Tours, Toulouse, Marseilles, or Boulogne sur Mer. The two enemies were often condemned to travel, but in different directions, which, as Anquetil remarks, "was a simple and wise method of re-establishing peace between them, for time and new objects, and the interposition of friends to calm the minds of both parties, were always sure to heal the wounds."† But the pilgrims who chiefly demand our attention at present belong to a different class from these: they were men who, without having rendered themselves amenable to human laws, had undertaken painful journeys in obedience to what was prescribed to them by religion, as affording the means of correcting vices, and of atoning in the sense required for the sins of their past lives.

The palmer differed from the pilgrim in having no fixed residence, but spending his life in visiting holy places, at the same time professing voluntary poverty. Spenser, without scorn, describes the former :

"At length they chaunst to meet upon the way  
An aged sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,  
His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,  
And by his belt his booke he hanging had ;

\* Mabillon, *Præfat.* in ii. *Sæcul. Benedict.* § 5.

† *Hist. de Rheims*, lib. iii. 155.

Sober he seemede, and very sagely sad;  
 And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,  
 Simple in show, and voide of malice bad;  
 And all the way he prayed as he went,  
 And often knockt his breast, as one that did repent.”\*

The church had introduced the custom of assigning a journey to the holy land as an efficacious penance; and there are not wanting even modern writers separated from its communion who can discern and point out the wisdom of what was thus recommended. “I know of nothing,” says one of these, “so likely to bow down a proud spirit, and soften it into deep and purifying thought, as a long distant journey. There is no heart proof against the solemn influence of solitude among strange and impressive scenes. The confidence which it has in itself, and in which its contempt for the future was intrenched, gradually gives way among them. The new forms under which nature presents herself, are so many proofs that there is an existence and a power, of which, in the thoughtless uniformity of the past, it had received no idea, and with that new consciousness, rushes in a train of feelings, which, if not the same, are nearer than most others to those inspired by religion. For this effect of the long and often perilous journey which he prescribed, the priest might look with some degree of confidence; and no doubt experience taught him, that the hardiest of his penitents was not likely to come back from Syria with a mind unimpressed with the sentiments he wished to inspire. Other advantages also presented themselves in favour of this kind of penance. To the natural influence of the journey through wild and distant countries, was added that of the example of many devout and enthusiastic wanderers. At every stage of his route, the traveller was sure to meet one or more of these humble palmers, either hastening to, or returning from, the holy city. Their humility, self-denial, and constant prayer, were powerful appeals to the haughty soul of the unwilling pilgrim. Generally also he was, by the nature of his expedition, far separated from his former companions: for his proud knights and splendid retinue no longer followed him as a gay and gallant noble; and if they accompanied him, it was to be worshippers, like himself, at the holy tomb. He was thus led to form associations which materially aided the purposes for which the penance was imposed, and the priest knew that his instructions and exhortations to repentance would be repeated as many times as there were leagues between his parish and the sacred walls of Jerusalem. Nor are reasons of another kind wanted to justify the preference of pilgrimages over other penances. What could be more proper than to send him, who had broken the laws of Christ, to contemplate the scenes which had been hallowed by his sufferings? What could better persuade to repentance, than the sight of objects which recalled to mind all he had done for the sake of mankind, and to bring them under the dominion of love and peace? The guilty violator of divine laws could not tread the streets of the holy city, without feeling as if the very stones cried out against him, to remind him, as his eyes turned towards the heights of Calvary, that he had ‘crucified the Son of God afresh.’” So far this writer. But the moral advantages of this discipline were



well understood and explained with greater clearness at the time when it received the highest sanction. In all ages, many of those who thought seriously about their salvation, used at times to leave their home and family to have leisure to follow God, disengaged from domestic cares, going out of their own country like the Magi, to repair to Christ.

We read of many saints who, by the inspiration of God, have abandoned houses, and riches, and friends, to travel like pilgrims through strange nations, in order to serve him more at ease and freedom. In this conduct, they imitated not only Abraham but the apostles. They felt that the distractions and ties of a multitude of friends and riches, and worldly concerns, left them not sufficient leisure to attend to the interests of their souls, and the fruits of such pilgrimages were so notorious that it became a proverb. "Exeat aula qui volet esse pius."

Many remarkable examples of this kind are found in the records of the middle age. Frodoard, in his history of the Church of Rheims, relates that in the time of Foulques Archbishop, who had succeeded Hincmar, there came into the province of Rheims, seven brothers, Gibrian, Helan, Tresan, Germain, Veran, Atran and Petran, with their three sisters, Fracia, Promptie, and Possenna, from Ireland in pilgrimage, for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ; and they established themselves each in a separate place on the banks of the river Marne. Gibrian, who was a priest, inhabited the village of Cosse, where he lived many years soberly, justly, and piously, applying himself till the end of his life to combat for his salvation.\* In the seventh century, St. Giles seeing that he could not lead an obscure and retired life in his own country, where his piety and learning made him the object of general admiration, resolved to leave it to avoid the applause of men; he, therefore, passed into France, and chose for his dwelling a hermitage in the desert, which was near the mouth of the Rhone. Thence he removed into a place called Garde, and thence into a forest in the diocese of Nismes. The Saxon chronicle relates, that in the year 891, "three Scots from Ireland, came to King Alfred in a boat without any oars; they had stolen away because they would live in a state of pilgrimage for the love of God, they recked not where. The boat in which they came was made of two hides and a half; and they took with them provisions for seven nights, and within seven nights they came to land in Cornwall, and soon after went to King Alfred. They were named Dubslane, Macbeth, and Mælinman." From the same motives monks came from Rome into Ireland, being also drawn thither by the desire of a stricter life, or the love of sacred learning.† Bede relates of St. Hilda, "that after dedicating herself wholly to the service of God, she intended, from the province of the East Angles, to pass over if possible into France, forsaking her native country and all that she had, and there to live a stranger for our Lord, in the monastery of Celles, that so she might the more easily merit the eternal country of heaven." These motives were expressly approved of by the greatest philosophers of the middle ages. "Change of place," says St. Bonaventura, "is sometimes favourable to the spiritual health of novices. In changing place they change objects which may have led them astray. Men often become better and more

\* Lib. iv. cap. 9.

† Monastic. Hiber. Introduc.

perfect by leaving for a time their country and their native land.”\* St. Jerome goes so far as to say that a monk cannot be perfect in his own country.† In the last book, we observed that the interests of learning were thought to require absence in a foreign country, and now it appears that a journey to strange lands was deemed no less conducive to those of a spiritual nature. The moderns are for placing the summit of virtue and happiness in domestic repose, but after all, what skills it in this voyage of life, to cast anchor and say to one’s bark, “Let us rest here; behold the port which is appointed to you! here you shall sleep like an island of the sea, which the force of the bitter waves cannot disturb! On the wide seas of this world there is no port, and shipwreck alone casts us upon the shore.”‡ St. Augustine treats at large upon the social life, and shows to how many evils and offences it is exposed, notwithstanding all the wisdom and prudence which men may bring to it;§ and besides, he observes, “that after the example of their respective prototypes, the two cities into which the whole race of men are divided, Jerusalem and Babylon, are distinguished from each other by the former being in a state of pilgrimage, and the latter in a condition of apparent rest. Cain, whose name signified possession, founded a city earthly, having this world for its fixed resting place, established in its temporal peace and felicity; but Abel, whose name denoted grief, was a stranger and a wanderer. Seth and Enos were named after the resurrection, and the hope of those who invoke God. For thus the city of God in the time of its pilgrimage is only sustained by hope, which arises from faith in the resurrection of Christ.” These are the profound views of St. Augustine;§ but in a lower sense, and without reference to saints who approach perfection, it is obvious, that in a foreign country the pilgrim or scholar has more opportunity for recollection. Separated from former companions and occupations, the days of his youth come back upon him like a plaintive strain of harmony; a tone of mourning pervades his thoughts and looks. Neither personal merit nor family connections avail him there: he is left alone, and has occasion to think upon God and on eternal truths as well as to practise humility in an eminent degree. Introduced to a different language and to different manners, his former associations are broken, and the facilities to vice are diminished: he can hardly be so profligate as to begin the abuse of new words and of new manners. Such solitude was favourable to charity. Under the strong religious impressions which it was calculated to produce, every one seemed a friend, every face was loved, every one was believed to be pious, and just, and innocent. In society it is hard to retain such a temper; hatred, suspicions, and indignation, easily enter and possess the heart. Travelling was a school of humility, when a great man would wander like Ulysses, as a poor unknown stranger. We find the son of Sirach testifying that he has travelled much, and exhorting others to follow his example.\*\*

The ancients were not ignorant of the intellectual and moral good which resulted from leaving home, and visiting distant countries. Py-

\* S. Bonaventuræ Speculum Novitiorum, cap. 2.

† De Lamartine.

‡ Id. lib. xv. cap. i. 17, 18.

§ Epist. v. || De Civitate Dei, lib. xix. cap. 5.

\*\* Ecclesiast. xxxiv. 12; xvi. 23; xxxix. 5.

thagoras, we are told, finding himself loaded with gifts and occupations of public life by his countrymen, concluded that it was most difficult to sit at home and to philosophize, and remarked, "that all who had before him studied philosophy, had passed their lives among strangers: therefore renouncing all political administration, he departed from Samos and repaired to Italy, where he established himself in Crotona."\* "Abducendus est etiam," says Cicero, speaking of him whose passions were to be corrected, "nonnumquam ad alia studia, sollicitudines, curas, negotia: loci denique mutatione, tamquam ægroti non convalescentes, sæpe curandus est."† Sophocles introduces a king, acknowledging the benefit he has received from having been educated a foreigner in a strange country, where Theseus says to Œdipus,

ὥς ἰδὼν γ' αὐτὸς, ὥς ἐπαυδαῖν ξένος,  
ὥσπερ σὺ ———.†

And when Pythagoras returned to Samos after an absence of twelve years, we are told that he was received with admiration by the seniors; for that he seemed to have brought home from his peregrination more beauty and wisdom, and greater indication of divinity.‡

With respect to the Christian pilgrimages, additional reasons would result in favour of them, from considering what was the particular object in view in their institution. The desire of visiting places, associated with the memory of persons dear and venerable, is a feeling of humanity recognized in all ages by the universal race of men, and interwoven with the profoundest roots of the sentient principle of our nature. If it sprang from mere caprice or some particular error of any age, we should not find that its reasonableness could be every where and at all times understood, as we know that it is. When Chateaubriand was at Sparta, a chief of the law desired to know for what object he had come to Greece. Upon the interpreter replying that he had come to examine the ruins, the chief burst into loud laughter, and regarded him as a madman, until he added, "that he was only passing on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem," when the other exclaimed, "Kalo, kalo," making no more questions, but seeming perfectly satisfied; for all the motives of religion are understood and respected every where. A striking instance of the intensity of this feeling is furnished by Father Bouhours, in his history of St. Francis Xavier, for he relates, "that after the death of the saint, one of the Indians who had been converted by him, and who was a most holy Christian, not content with visiting the place of his death, made a journey across an immense country, and passed the seas in order to behold the castle of Xavier. Entering the chamber where he was born, he threw himself on his knees and kissed the ground and wept, after which, without paying attention to any thing else in Europe, he returned to India, considering as a great treasure, a little piece of stone which he had picked out of the wall of the chamber."§ The pilgrimages to certain abbeys like Einsiedeln, or to Shrines, as that of St. Thomas at Canterbury, were themselves facts which, by attesting the truth of ancient prodigies thus transmitted from father to son, continually

\* Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 5.

† Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 5.

VOL. II.—27

‡ Tuscul. iv.

§ Œdip. Col. 562.

§ Lib. ii. 282.



excited men to greater fervour. Visiting holy places also to kiss the spot which was darkened with the blood of martyrs, or to have a more lively apprehension of the great mysteries which were consummated in Palestine, by beholding a representation of the very places in which they passed, conduced, when performed with what a certain great German author calls "the sacramental sense," from the enjoyment of which none but the race of sophists are excluded, to the experience of a kind of inspiration; and was an act which was known to be holy by its fruits. Generally, as we have already seen, the object of pilgrimages was to deliver men for a time from temporal cares and acquaintances, from the concerns of a family, and from all those solitudes of the world which so engross the thoughts of men, that whatever they may pretend they cannot think upon God or the state of their soul, or meditate on the eternal years. It was also to give them opportunity of practising humility, the first step in the heavenly life, and of mortifying their bodies by fatigue, which of itself might overcome sensuality. The very idea too that in going perhaps this journey of three days into the wilderness, to sacrifice to the Lord their God, they were also going to a place where thousands and millions had gone before, in circumstances like their own, for the sake of their souls, and where many of them had been permanently converted to God, must have spoken to the heart in powerful language. Yet we find prudence and moderation along with the greatest fervour, as may be witnessed in the letter of Petrus Cellensis to the prior of Canterbury, where he says, "My conscience accuses and excuses me for not going to the tomb of our holy Thomas, the precious martyr of God. I am a monk, an abbot, and an old man, and as such I ought not to leave my cloister, nor neglect my temporal cares, but I should lean my staff against my fig-tree and have in mind the eternal years. It is pious to go, it is pious not to go. The journey is good which is attended with holy devotion; but the detention is religious which is joined with pious commemoration."\*

It was ungentle and unjust scorn in Milton to speak of "pilgrims that strayed so far to seek in Golgotha him dead, who lives in heaven;" a sentence comprising a most false testimony and a most sophistical objection. It was well known by these men who strayed to Golgotha, that the only indispensable pilgrimage was that to our heavenly country, by the purification of the soul which might be obtained without leaving home. "Non enim," as St. Augustin says, "ad eum qui ubique præsens est locis movemur, sed bono studio bonisque moribus."† But yet in spite of Milton's incredulity, the way, to the pilgrims, might not be in vain nor unfruitful.

St. Paul desires that married persons should separate from each other for a time, and abandon the cares of wedded life, to give themselves to prayer.‡ By a pilgrimage this separation was joined with prayer, and on this ground Wittwyler, in his history of St. Meinrod and the pilgrimage of Einsiedeln, defends the practice as beneficial and holy. But it is said abuses may have followed; undoubtedly it may have been so. But where have not abuses followed? and as Tschudi a German author re-

\* Petri Cellens. Epist. lib. vii. 21.

† 1 Corinth. vii. 5.

‡ De Doctrina Christiana, cap. 10.

marks, "that is at once the greatest abuse when men destroy what is good in order to prevent abuse." "There went," you say, "in the holy throng, men of little worth, and hypocrites most vile, who looked for nought but gold:" God alone, it is true, knows the pilgrim, but this uncertainty furnished no valid ground for objection against such a practice. The devil led our blessed Saviour into the holy city, and we need not marvel to find him conducting thither whom he will. "Nor," as St. Augustin says, "ought the sheep to lay aside their clothing, because wolves sometimes conceal themselves in it."\* Persons, you complain, used to desert their families to go on pilgrimage; "But," says the historian of Einsiedeln, who wrote from experience, "did they not return better fathers, better sons, and better men? Were not the proud become humble, the weak strong, the immoral pure, and was not the temporary loss recompensed an hundred fold?"

Let it be remarked, too, that the persons who condemn the pilgrims are themselves wanderers, only differing from them in having no religious motive for their way. They are wanderers, like that hero of Paganism, who was impatient to leave the people and city of the Phœcians, and yet, no sooner is he departed, than we find him crying out, "Ah! whither have I come! Would that I had remained there with the Phœcians"—

αἰδ' ὄφελον μέναι παρὰ φαίηςσιν  
αὐτοῦ† . .

It is not for men, the sole of whose unblest feet can find no rest, to speak disdainfully of the pilgrim's course, impelled by a reasonable desire, and bounded by a holy vow. Granting that the places in general to which he repaired may have had no recommendation in the estimation of the world, and of those who remain in it, what then? Cannot religion give to particular places a charm, and an importance beyond what commerce or pleasure can impart? "Men," saith Pindar, "speak of the Island of Delos, but the gods in Olympus call it, 'The far-famed star of the dark earth.'" Loretto and Walsingham make but a poor figure in the diary of an epicurean or commercial traveller; but in what a tender and hallowed light are they seen by the poor? In the year 1061, an obscure widow, inhabiting a small village, on the wild and tempestuous coast of Norfolk, by erecting a little chapel, resembling that at Nazareth, where our blessed Lady was saluted by the angel Gabriel, is able to impart a renown to that village which extends throughout all England; and such as not all the kings of the earth combined, with all the aid of parliaments to boot, could ever have given to it. Erasmus describes Walsingham in his light manner; and yet, even from his account, one cannot help regarding it with interest:—"Not far from the sea," saith he, "about four miles, there standeth a town, living almost of nothing else but upon the resort of pilgrims. There is a college of canons there, supported by their offerings. In the church is a small chapel, but all of wood, whereunto, on either side, at a narrow and little door, are such admitted as come with their devotions and offerings. Small light there is in it, and none other but by wax tapers, yielding a most dainty and pleasant smell; nay, if you look into it, you would say

\* Lib. ii. de Serm. Dom. in Monte, cap. 12.

† Od. xiii. 204.

it was the habitation of heavenly saints, indeed, so bright shining it is all over with precious stones, with gold and silver." Camden mentions, that princes have repaired to this chapel, walking thither bare-foot. These places are now plundered, overthrown, and stigmatized, as the proper objects of scorn to men of intelligence; but is it just to prevent the poor from making their innocent journey to a cross,—to some spot, known in their annals as the far-famed star of the dark earth,—while such immense sums are squandered upon voyages of mere pleasure, to visit springs of mineral water, and brilliant cities, through idleness and vanity? Why are the pious to be condemned for seeking holy places for the sake of edification, in order that the visible and temporal may be made the means for them to gain eternity?

To the great Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln, it was the custom every year for whole parishes of Switzerland to repair, in solemn procession, with cross and banners: vast numbers of nobles and princes also used to make this pilgrimage. More collected or saintly looks I never beheld than in the pilgrims whom I met along the roads leading to it. In the year 1826, there were, among these pilgrims, one hundred and fifty thousand communicants, which only exceeded by a small number the average amount every year. Pilgrims, before setting out to visit holy places, were enjoined to hear mass, in which was to be said the prayer for travellers; and, at the end, the Roman ritual prescribed various psalms and prayers, which the priest was to repeat, in reference to them. In like manner, on their return, they were to receive a benediction, the form of which may be seen in the ritual. Of the ardour for visiting the holy land in ages of faith, there are on record many affecting instances. Raymond, a young man of Placentia, having been early impressed with a veneration for the pious pilgrims who passed through his native city, fell into a profound melancholy, of which no one could discover the cause; at last, persuaded into a confession by the bitter grief of his affectionate mother, he told her that his mourning originated in his earnest desire to visit Palestine. He had concealed his desire till now, from the fear of afflicting her; but, instead of being grieved, as he had expected, she regarded him, for a time, with silent joy, and then embraced him, saying, "I am a widow, and I may imitate the example of St. Anne, who, in her widowhood, quitted not the temple of Jerusalem, neither day nor night." Having then informed her son that she was resolved to accompany him on his holy journey, they immediately made their preparations. Previous to their departure, they received the episcopal blessing from the holy prelate of Placentia, who placed a red cross upon their breasts, and begged them to remember their country during their meritorious engagement, and to pray that it might be preserved during the calamities with which it seemed threatened by signs from heaven. They then took up their staff and scrip, and set out on their journey, accompanied, for a short distance, by their friends and neighbours. Nothing remarkable befell them on the way; but when they came in sight of Jerusalem, they are described as weeping at the remembrance of the sufferings of the Lord of Life. Their devotion, on approaching the holy sepulchre, was still more vividly excited; and as they knelt, pouring out their souls at the foot of the cross, they passionately desired that they might die there, where the Saviour himself had



poured out his blood. Having visited the other sacred objects in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood, they set sail for their native land; but scarcely were they embarked, when Raymond fell sick of a dangerous malady, but he soon recovered, and they arrived safely at land. No sooner, however, were they thus near the completion of their long journey, than the fond mother was seized with a fatal illness, and expired in the arms of her son, spending her last breath in blessing him, and exhorting him to pursue a life of virtue and piety. But a far more memorable example is furnished by St. Jerome, in his immortal letters, describing the pilgrimage of St. Paula:—"Before setting out, she divided all that she possessed among her children; then she embarked, weeping, and afraid to turn her eyes towards the dear objects that she was to leave for ever. She touched at the isle of Pontia, celebrated by the exile of Flavia Domitilla, who generously confessed Christ in the persecution of Diocletian. She visited with respect the modest retreat, where this holy lady spent the long years of her martyrdom; but all her wishes were fixed upon arriving at Jerusalem, whither she hastened on the wings of faith. She passed between Charybdis and Scylla, in the Adriatic, and was obliged to stop at Mithon, to repair her exhausted strength. Thence she arrived, successively, at Cythera, at the promontory of Malea, at Rhodes, and at the island of Cyprus, where she had the consolation to find the holy Bishop Epiphanius, who retained her with him for ten days, which she employed to the glory of God, in visiting the numerous monasteries which covered this island, and every where she left abundant alms to the multitude of holy personages, whom the renown of the illustrious prelate had drawn together from all parts of the world. From thence she passed to Seleucia and to Antioch, where the Bishop Paulin detained her for some time. Thence she made a painful journey, during the depth of winter, through Phenicia and Syria. Arrived at the tower of Elias, on the banks of the Sarepta, she addressed her prayers to our Saviour Jesus Christ, and traversed the sands of Tyre. Thence she passed to Cotti, which is now called Ptolemaïde, where she entered the country of the Philistines. She saw the celebrated tower of Straton, and the house of that Cornelius who is mentioned in St. Paul's Epistles, which is now a church. She passed through Lydda, where Dorcas and Enea were raised to life by St. Peter and St. Paul. Then she saw the tower of Arimathea, to which belonged Joseph, who buried our Lord. Thence she passed by Emmaus, which is now called Nicopolis. Here the house of Cleophas is still shown: it is changed into a church. Paula remained some time at Gabaon. Thence, leaving on the left the sepulchre of Helena, she entered Jerusalem. Now she gave proof of her great humility; for, as the proconsul of Palestine, who knew the family of the noble lady, had prepared an apartment for her in the Pretorian palace, she would have no other lodging but a little humble cell. Without taking any rest, she began to visit the holy places, with such an ardent piety, that, without the desire which pressed her to go to prostrate herself in those she had not as yet seen, she could not turn herself away from those which she beheld. O what tears did she pour forth at the foot of the cross and in the holy sepulchre! I call to witness the inhabitants of Jerusalem who were present. She then visited the citadel of Sion, and the place where the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles. After

distributing all that remained to her between her servants and the poor, she departed at last for Bethlehem. She went a little out of her way to see the sepulchre of Rachel. Arriving at Bethlehem, and entering into the grotto, she contemplated the holy asylum of the queen of virgins. There I heard her say that, with the eyes of faith, she saw the divine infant, and the magi adoring, and the Virgin Mother, and the shepherds hastening to behold the Word made flesh. In the joy which accompanied her holy tears, she cried, 'Hail, Bethlehem, so worthy of thy name; House of Bread! where the Bread of Heaven deigned to descend for us. Ah! how is it possible that I, wretched sinner, should be found worthy to kiss this cradle, to pray in this cave, where the Virgin Mother deposited her Divine fruit? This shall be the place of my rest, since it is the country of my God; here will I dwell, since my God did not disdain to be born here: here will I give myself to that God who gave himself up for me.' Descending then to the tower of Ader, she saw the place where Jacob fed his flocks, and where the shepherds heard the angels singing, 'Gloria in excelsis Deo.' Thence she passed to Gaza and Bethsura, and to the house of Sara: she saw the cradle of Isaac, and the oak of Abraham. Then she passed to Chebron, called Cariath, that is, the town of the four men, because it was supposed to contain the tombs of Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, and Adam. On the following day, at the rising of the sun, she stopped on the summit of Caphar Baruccha, whence she beheld the vast solitude, where once stood the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. But I return with the illustrious traveller to Jerusalem. Paula visited the tomb of Lazarus: the house where dwelt Mary Magdalen and Martha. She then went to Jericho; and on the way thought of the good Samaritan. She stopped at the place where the blind received their sight. The next day, soon after midnight, she travelled to the banks of the Jordan; and as the first rays of the sun gilded its banks, she reflected on that Son of Justice which there began his divine mission. She contemplated with veneration the tombs of Joshua, and of Eliezer, son of Aaron; and she could not sufficiently admire this latter, which is at Gaban, in the territory of his family, because, being charged with the division of the conquered land, he had kept for his own part the country which was the most scorched and barren. She then visited Silo and Sichem. She entered a church, which has been built on the side of the mountain of Garezim, over the well of the patriarch Jacob, where our Saviour sat with the woman of Samaria. Thence she went to view the tombs of the twelve patriarchs. Weak as she was, she mounted on foot to the summit of the celebrated mountain where the prophet Abdias retired with the hundred prophets in time of persecution, living in caverns, and feeding upon bread and water. Thence she went to Nazareth, to Chanaan and Capharnaum. She saw the Lake of Tiberiad, sanctified by the honour of having borne the Lord in his navigations, and the desert where he fed the multitude. From the top of Mount Thabor she discovered the mountains of Hermon and Hermonium, and the vast plains of Galilee. She was pointed out the city of Naïn, where the widow's son was raised; but time would fail me to describe all the places which the venerable Paula was prompted to visit by piety and faith. I pass, therefore, at once into Egypt, where she visited the church which is built over the tomb of the prophet Micah. Then passing over the im-

mense sands of the desert, where she had nothing to guide her but the print of steps, almost effaced, of the travellers who had preceded her in that perilous way, she arrived at the river Seor, and the plains of Tanis. Thence she passed to the city of No, which is now called Alexandria. She then visited Nitria, which had just recently embraced the faith of Christ. The bishop of this city, named Isidore, who had had the honour to confess his religion generously during a persecution, came out to meet her with a crowd of monks, many of whom were priests. At the sight of so many eminent personages, she rejoiced in the glory of the Lord, acknowledging herself unworthy of the honours there showed to her. Then it was that she became acquainted with the Macaires, the Arsetuses, the Serapions, and the crowd of other saints, who were the glory of Christ in these countries. She visited the holy solitaires with respect, and prostrated herself humbly at the feet of each of them. In the least of these servants of God, she thought she beheld God: and it seemed to her that the honours she rendered to them were rendered to Christ, whose image they were to her eyes. O, wonderful ardour! O courage! almost incredible in a woman, Paula would have wished to have passed the remainder of her days with them, subject to their austere rule, if she had not been recalled to Palestine; so, embarking at Pelusa, she passed to Magunia, and thence returned to Bethlehem; where, for the first three years, she inhabited a small house, until a monastery with cells had been constructed by her orders. There, by the way-side, she built an hospital, which was always open to poor travellers in the very place where Joseph and Mary had found no asylum. Here ended her travels; and from this period (adds St. Jerome) I shall confine myself to describe the progress which she continued to make in virtue."\*

The motives for visiting the holy land, as has been admitted by modern writers, were reasonable and holy; and that Rome should have been another place to which pilgrims, from every part of the world were directed, can excite no surprise, when we consider the religious interest attached to that venerable city, and the indulgences which were extended to those who visited it with a devout intention. We find repeated mention of the pilgrimages to Rome in the Saxon Chronicle; Ina, king of Wessex, who founded the monastery of Glastonbury, afterwards went to Rome, and continued there to the end of his life. Again, in the year 709, we read that Cenred went to Rome, and Offa with him; and Cenred was there to the end of his life. Alfred sent pilgrims to Rome: for kings used often to send pilgrims thither, and to Jerusalem, paying their expenses, as we see in the testament of René, King of Sicily, so late as in the year 1474.† On their return such pilgrims always carried their palms at the procession.

In the remarkable letter which Canute addressed to the bishops and nation of England, he describes, in simple and affecting language, the motives which induced him to make a pilgrimage to Rome: and it is interesting to observe how precisely similar they were to those, which still actuate every devout Catholic who repairs thither. Independent of the advantage resulting to the traveller himself, there were reasons to recommend the custom of this particular pilgrimage to the judgment

---

\* S. Hieron. Epist. ad Eustoch.

† Mem. de Comines, Preuves.



even of those who were politically wise: for, as Spedalieri shows, the Christian pilgrims meeting together in Rome from every country, brought back to their own land a kind of practical and personal conviction of all being children of one mother, so that afterwards every one felt within himself an additional motive for desiring to avert discord, and whatever might interrupt the concord of the common family.\*

To estimate justly the disposition of the pilgrim's mind, we should consider what were the difficulties to be encountered on a journey, in the middle age, even, as Thucydides says, "by a well-girded man." It is true, nothing was then more common than travelling. What a great traveller was St. Bernard! and how many journeys did even a St. Theresa make for objects connected with the different establishments which she founded throughout Spain! We find no trace, indeed, of men and families abandoning their native land to travel over the world, through the vanity of that knight in Ariosto, who has squandered his estate, and of whom we are told,

"Ruined, at length he thinks he will be gone  
To other country, where he is unknown."

We have seen that some travelled in order to conceal their virtues, not their vices; but chivalry and the scholastic life corresponded with devotion in suggesting the advantages of travelling, like Homer, to distant nations, to study, not alone the manners, but also the laws, customs, and institutions, which prevailed in different places; and the influence of the Catholic religion, far more than the wisdom of some of the ancient sages, tended to overthrow those barriers, which national jealousies and pride have so often, and in so many countries, interposed between the mutual intercourse of men. As with the Dorians, who prohibited travelling, and excluded all foreigners, through an anxiety to keep up their national character and customs, and particularly as, under the laws of Zaleucus, who made it death to leave one's country for another. Christine de Pisan deems it greatly in praise of Louis de Bourbon, fourth brother of King Charles V. that he was a great traveller: "*Moult a voyagé et esté en maintes bonnes et honorables places.*"† George Chastellain could boast, in like manner, that he had travelled in France, Spain, England, and Italy; and the poet Ronsard, that he had devoted a long time to this employment.

"J ay long temps voyagé en ma tendre jeunesse  
Desireux de louange, ennemi de paresse."‡

It was during his travels in Germany and his visits to all the great courts of Europe, that the noble and learned Spaniard, Don Diego Savedra Faxardo, collected the materials for his admirable work on the Institutions of a Christian Prince. Like him described by Dante, nothing could overcome, in the ardent spirits of the middle age, the zeal they had to explore the world, and search the ways of life, man's evil and his virtue.|| Homer is represented saying, that he prefers wandering to remaining in the sacred streets of Cyme:

\* De diritti dell'uomo, lib. v. 5.

† Gouget, tom. xii. 225.

‡ Livre des fais, &c. ii. chap. 14.

|| Hell, xxvi.

—Μέγας δὲ με θυμὸς ἐπείρει  
 δῆμον ἐς ἀλλοδαπῶν ἵέναι ὁλόντων.\*

Petrarch, in a letter to Andrew Dondolo, doge of Venice, apologizes for his own wandering life, and says, "Heroes, philosophers, and apostles, have led the same." He might have added, that the noblest works of human genius denote clearly that their authors were pilgrims and strangers upon earth. Chateaubriand defends the plan of his *Martyrs* from those who condemned it as being only that of a journey, by observing that the *Odyssey* is nothing but a journey; that the *Æneid*, the *Lusiad* of Camoens, the *Jerusalem* of Tasso, and the *Telemachus* of Fenelon, are also journeys, or chiefly composed of journeys. But there was still a higher consideration which moved men in the middle ages in favour of travelling,—for they remarked, that the life of our Divine Master was like a continual journey and pilgrimage. Consider how often he and his blessed mother travelled, beginning with that journey from Nazareth to the mountains of Judea, which, with the return, was a distance of twice ninety-five miles. Then there was the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem of Judea, which was ninety-six miles; from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, with the return, which was twelve miles; from Bethlehem into Egypt, which was about three hundred miles, and back again to Nazareth: from Nazareth to Jerusalem, which was ninety miles, and back again; from Nazareth to the Jordan, which was ninety-two miles. From thence to the desert, five; from the desert to Bethany, fifteen; from thence to Cana in Galilee, ninety-four; thence to Capernaum, forty-five; thence to Jerusalem, one hundred and twelve; thence to Bethbesen on the Jordan, twenty-five; thence to Sichar in Samaria, forty-four; thence to Cana, fifty; thence to Bethsaida, forty-seven; thence to Capernaum, six; thence to the Gessareneth, with the return, which was ten; thence to Jerusalem, one hundred and twelve; thence to the Lake of Genesareth, one hundred and six; thence to Capernaum, six; thence to Nain, with the return, which was one hundred miles. Thence to Nazareth, forty-seven; thence to Sephoris, fifteen; thence to Capernaum, fifty; thence to Corozaim, with the return, sixteen; thence to the confines of Tyre, fifty-five; thence to Sidon, twenty-five; thence to Capernaum, fifty-five; thence to Dalmanutha, five; thence to Bethsaida, five; thence to Cæsarea-Philippi, thirty-eight; thence to Mount Thabor, fifty-eight; thence to Capernaum, forty-five; thence to Jerusalem, with the return, which was two hundred and twenty-four; thence to Bethabara, on the Jordan, thirty-six; thence to Jerusalem by a circuit of one hundred and twelve miles; thence to Bethany, twenty-three; thence to Ephrem, twenty; thence to Jericho, sixteen; thence to Bethany, twenty; thence to Jerusalem and back to Bethany. Then twice again from Bethany to Jerusalem, with the return thither. And lastly, the final return to Jerusalem.†

In the middle ages, the manner even of ordinary travelling had many advantages. Young nobles, of high houses, would then make their way on foot "in forma pauperis," with peasant's shoes and staff in hand. Thus would they foster habits of simplicity and endurance, and that amiable taste for the beauties of nature, which is so closely allied to

\* Epig. iv.  
 VOL. II.—28

T

† Voyages de Jesus Christ.

many virtues. What delightful recollections were in store for him who used to rise before the sun, in order to find a more refreshing bed amidst the salt-sea billows of the Mediterranean, where, from amidst them, he would observe, thrown against the blushing sky, the dark and stately form of the pines, which line the rocky shore,—for him who used to wander beneath the marble steepes of Chiavera, or through the forests, on the shore of Chiassi, listening to the gathering melody which rolls from branch to branch, when Eolus hath loosed from his cavern the dripping south? What joy would fill his breast, when he beheld the snow-topt Apennines, like golden clouds, amidst the radiance of the rising sun; and below, far in the distance, for the first time, Soracte, and the Tiber, who first unlocks near there his mighty flood, as they appear to him who descends the Mount Ciminus, journeying on his way through Ronciglione to the eternal city! What a sweet, fond theme afterwards, for such as loved him, to hear of his “moving accidents by flood and field, his hair-breadth ’scapes, and most disastrous chances that his youth had suffered.” In the middle ages, even this rambling assumed a religious character. Along with their student and castle songs, *ὑμνῶν ὑμνων νεωτέρων*, as Pindar says,\* these young wanderers could all sweeten their thoughtful hours with repeating some hymn of holy Church, corresponding with their state. He who was first risen would leave the town before his company, and, as he passed along the shore of the placid sea, spread out, in calm majesty, like the floor of a mighty temple, when already the rising sun darted his beams, and with his arrowy radiance, gave fearful note of provision for the ensuing hours, he would think of the dangers that might befall him during the meridian heat; he would be reminded of the flames of anger and the sins of an impatient tongue, and then he would repeat, with audible voice, the primal hymn, which prays to God, at the rising of the star of day,

“Lingam refrænans temperet  
Ne litis horror insonet.”

It is not a mere picture of the imagination which ascribes such manners to the common traveller. In a later age the Chancellor D’Aguesau mentions, that when his father and mother used to travel, they always began by reciting the prayers of travellers, which are in the holy book of Priests.

The scenes of life too with which travelling generally familiarised men, conduced to the formation of a noble and thoughtful character. They were not led by it to associate with the wretched godless crew, which, in our own time, is annually discharged upon all the roads of Europe, from the pestilential dens of London or Paris. In general, a modern traveller is only transported from city to city, and from inn to inn, where the same atmosphere, the same dissipation, the same discourse, the same faces, accompany him: he is escorted frequently by atheists and epicures, as if by demons—

“Ah, fearful company! but in the Church  
With saints, with gluttons at the tavern’s mess.”†

A wanderer in the middle ages, like Dante, might be traced, in his

\* Olymp. ix.

† Dante, Hell, xxii.



devious course, to an assembly in the sacristy of some Church, or to some knightly castle among the mountains, or to a chamber in some monastery, in a wild and solitary region, or to a tower of some lord near a river, or to a rock adjoining some castle, on which he used to sit, or to a palace of some splendid patron of learned men, or to some banquet hall in the house of some illustrious senator. These journeys had even occasionally the character of a pilgrimage. Peruthgarius, son of Theobald, attached to the court of Count Gerald, being despatched on a journey by that nobleman, and coming near the Church of the Martyrs, in the town of Kentibrut in Thurgau, was admonished by his page, who here showed himself no Pythagorean, to turn aside a little from the road, for the sake of prayer.\* Express and avowed pilgrimages were, however, many of the journeys of the lay nobility. In the Mortuary Hall on the dead body of the knight which was there exposed, used always to be placed his sword and the staff of pilgrimage, which he had borne to different places during his life.†

Thus far there might seem to be no reason for concluding that the life of a traveller, in the middle ages, had any connection with the character of mourners; but if we consider it with more attention, we shall find that not only, like other occupations of men, it was mixed with joy and sorrow, but that the latter must have predominated at least with the greater part of those who engaged in it. Young men, indeed, may have always rejoiced at the prospect of undertaking a perilous journey, through the same spirit which made the Athenian youth so eager to sail for Sicily: "the desire of seeing distant lands," καὶ ἐλλπίδες ὄντες σαρδίσσασθαι, as Thucydides says.‡ No sooner returned than they may have been ready to second the proposal of Laertes: "My thoughts and wishes bend again towards France." But no such spirit or encouragement can we ascribe to the pilgrim who left his home and country through penitence and who was often of advanced years, and already bowed down with the weight of calamity. "In the age of the Crusades," says Bonald, "men endeavoured to expiate crimes which were easy to commit, by virtues which were painful to practise."§ We must remember that, after all, the feudal life was especially domestic and sedentary. Long voyages, by men of mature age, were rare, and under all circumstances, painful and difficult. A journey from one province to another was a great enterprise. Hénault relates, that the monks of Saint Maures-Fossés, near Paris, excused themselves from going into Burgundy, "on account of the length and dangers of the journey." Thomas Poucyn, elected Abbot of Canterbury in the year 1334, travelling to Avignon to receive the Pope's benediction, arrived there after a journey of three weeks and three days, of which the expenses came to the sum of twenty-one pounds eighteen shillings. Frequently men had to travel over lands without a road, and through a people speaking a multitude of different idioms. It was not till the thirteenth century that some inns began to be found in Italy. Hence, before going on a journey, men went to confession. Thus Alcuin writes to Dametas: "Make safe your journey by confession, and remember to guard it by alms."§ St. An-

\* Mabillon, Acta Ord. S. Bened. Sæc. iv. 5.

† Lib. vi. 24.

‡ Legislation Primitive, iii. 275.

† Tristan, tom. v. 134.

§ Alcuini Epist. xlv.

selm writes in like manner to his brother, Burgundius, who was going to Jerusalem: "I advise and entreat you not to carry your sins with you, but get rid of them effectually by a general and exact confession of all your offences from your youth."\* Since thou hast far to go, bear not along the clogging burden of a guilty soul.

Abbot Rodulf, in the beginning of the twelfth century, describes his journey across those Alps, which saw pass, in the eleventh, that terrible red flag of the children of Rollo, which was to put to flight the eagles of the eastern empire. It was in winter, on his return from Rome, and scarcely, he says, was the suffering endurable by the human body. "We were detained at the foot of the Mount Jove,† in a village called Restopolis, from which we could neither advance nor retreat in consequence of the quantity of snow which had fallen. At length 'the Maroniers,' or guides, conducted us as far as St. Remi, which is on the same mountain, where we found a vast multitude of travellers; and where we were in danger of death from the repeated falls of whole tracts of snow from the rocks above us. We remained some days in this unhappy village, till at length the guides said that they would lead on, but demanded a heavy price. Their heads and hands were guarded with skins and fur, and their shoes armed with iron nails, to prevent them from slipping on the ice, and they carried long spears in their hands, to feel their way along over the snow. It was very early in the morning, and with great fear and trembling the travellers celebrated and received the holy mysteries, as if preparing themselves for death. They contended with each other who should first make his confession; and since one priest did not suffice, they went about the Church confessing their sins to each other. While these things were passing within the Church with great devotion, there was a lamentable shout heard in the street—for the guides who had left the town to clear the way, were suddenly buried under a great fall of the snow, as if under a mountain. The people ran to save them, and pulled them out,—some dead, some but half alive, others with broken limbs. Upon this, we all returned to Restopolis, where we passed the Epiphany. Upon the weather clearing, we again set out, and succeeded happily in passing the profane mount of Jove."‡

In these holy pilgrims, the spirit of self-denial and mortification was continually put to the test. St. Aderal of Troyes, in the tenth century, made twelve pilgrimages to Rome in honour of the apostles, travelling the entire way on foot: and once being obliged to pass a swollen river, he boldly entered the torrent, and swam across. He passed the Apennines in a season of intense cold, barefooted, that he might suffer something for Jesus Christ, and each time that he crossed the Alps, he beat the rocks with bare feet.|| One of the old chronicles, relating the crusade of Frederic Barbarossa, says, that to paint the sufferings and the heroic resignation of the crusaders, would require the tongue of an angel. Such pilgrims did not resemble these modern travellers, who would all follow Hercules to the infernal regions in search of the poets, but, like

\* S. Anselmi Epist. lib. iii. 66.

† Great St. Bernard.

‡ Chronic. Abbatiae S. Trudonis, lib. xii. p. 496, apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. vii.

|| Desguerrois, Hist. du Diocèse de Troyes, 250.

Bacchus, taking especial care to bargain for a way that was neither too hot nor too cold.\* Their's was a way over the cold Alp, the nurse of snows through all the year, and through scorching deserts, where every shape of painful death surrounded them. Nicephorus relates that Evagrius came to Macarius the Anchorite, about the meridian hour, asking for some cold water, being quite exhausted with the heat and fatigue, to whom Macarius placidly replied, "My son, be content with the shade; for many travellers and navigators are this moment wanting it."†

Nor were sufferings wanting even in nearer lands. Many a pilgrim to Camaldoli might mourn while traversing those desolate scorched hills of broken earth, where wretched peasants spread before the sun, to be dried on the slaty bed of torrents, the little corn yielded by that ungracious soil. Hastening on their way to invoke God at the shrines of saints, these poor pilgrims would come to rivers, where they would have to give their last loaf to be transported across, having nothing else left to offer.‡ When a noble left his ancestral hall on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, if he had enemies they might rejoice, and say, like the suitors of Penelope, when they heard that Telemachus was setting out, "that he went to perish far from his friends, wandering alone like his father." They might indulge such a hope; for there were not wanting grounds to make it highly probable that it would be realized. William, Duke of Guyenne, was a proud violent prince, abandoned to all kinds of profligacy, and so haughty, that he seemed to look down upon the greatest nobles. He chose to recognise the antipope Anaclet, notwithstanding the efforts of St. Bernard and of the Bishop of Soissons, who in vain endeavoured to draw him from the schism. St. Bernard after retiring for some time to his Abbey of Châteliars, wrote from there to the duke, ordering him to come to him. Though this letter was little respectful in appearance, it produced the effect intended. The duke, immediately on receiving it, set out for the abbey, where the saint, after receiving him with all the honours due to his rank, proceeded to remonstrate with him without sparing him, speaking to him, during the seven days that he retained him, with such force, of death, the last judgment, and the pains of hell, that William appeared touched to the quick, and departed in the best dispositions. After some relapses, he was at length finally converted to a holy life. So, after making a devout testament, he resolved to set out on a pilgrimage to Compostella: and in such obscurity did he travel, that, after leaving his states, he was never more heard of. Suger supposed that he died on the road. All that is known for certain respecting him is, that, after traversing Biscay and the north of Castille, he reached the city of Leon; but beyond that, all was conjecture. The general opinion was, that God took him to himself towards the end of the first Lent of his pilgrimage, and that he received the viaticum on Good Friday. Many were the pilgrims who thus perished without ever having seen the day of return, the *νόστιμον ἡμῶν*, or without any thing having been ever heard of the manner, or place, or time of their death.

If Eurylochus, in Homer, departed weeping, though along with two

\* Aristoph. Ranæ, 119.

‡ Mabillon, Acta Ordinis S. Bened. Sæc. iv. 5.

† Lib. xi. c. 43, Hist. Eccles.



and twenty companions, how must he have mourned, who had to set out, through unknown ways, alone! The sign of mourners was even prescribed to be worn by those who had charge of receiving the pilgrims, as at Paris in the Hospital of St. Jaques-du-haut-Pas, founded by Galligus, guardian of another house of the same order in Italy; for there the members were enjoined to wear the sign of Tau woven upon their breasts. Well, then, might one of these pilgrims hear words of affection addressed him on his departure like those which were directed to retain Telemachus. "Dear child! what hath filled your mind with this desire? Wherefore, beloved, do you wish to go alone over much of the earth?"

——— ἵέναι πολλὴν ἐπὶ γαῖαν  
μοῦνος ἑών.\*

Remain at home and enjoy what you possess. There is no necessity for you to suffer evils on the cruel sea, or to wander thus

——— οὐδέ τί σε χεῖρ,  
πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρυγέτον κακὰ πάσχειν οὐδ' ἀλάλησθαι."

His reply, if made, as it well might be, in the Virgilian line, would not seem to deny the justice of ranking him as a mourner.—

"Vivite felices, quibus est fortuna peracta  
Jam sua: nos alia ex aliis in fata vocamur."†

We read in the Life of Lietbertus, Bishop of Cambray, that when that holy bishop had resolved upon making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, in the year 1054, setting out from his city of Cambray, he was accompanied for three miles by a multitude of people of both sexes and of all ages, who took leave of him with sighs and tears.‡

Those who remember with what horror a sea voyage was contemplated during the middle ages by the greatest part of those who travelled through devotion, can easily appreciate the degree of constancy which they must have possessed to undertake it. Perfectly in the style of Homer was their constant exclamation,

τίς δ' ἂν ἐκὼν τοσσόνδε διαδράμοι ἀλμυρὸν ὕδωρ  
ἄσπετον;

When the king St. Louis and his host had embarked at Marseilles, Joinville describes how the priests and clerks came upon the deck, and "began, with all the ship's company, to sing aloud the 'Veni Creator Spiritus.' Then the sailors, while singing, spread out the sails in the name of God, and the wind soon filling them, we began to make way, and soon lost sight of land, and saw only the water and the sky. 'Et par ce veulx-je bien dire, (continues the brave Joinville) que icelui est bien fol, qui sceut avoir aucune chose de l'autrui, et quelque péché mortel en son âme, et se boute en tel dangier. Car si on s'endort au soir, l'on ne scest si on se trouvera au matin au sous de la mer.'" Undoubtedly the pilgrim who returned from Jerusalem, or from some other distant land, bearing his branch of palm, and then placing it as an offering on the altar of the Church of his home, coming back alone after wan-

\* Odyssey, ii. 363.

† Æneid, lib. iii. 493.

‡ Vita Lietberti, Episc. Cameracensis, cap. 31, apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. ix.

dering for ten years, like Telemachus, or perhaps for twenty, like his great father, suffering many woes, might now with good reason have been felicitated as a man peculiarly favoured, to whom it was not destined, as Mercury says to Calypso of Ulysses, to perish far from his companions, but to whom it was still reserved to see once more his friends, and to come to his lofty-battlemented house, and to his fatherland.\* Guizot, in affirming that the crusades could have involved the chivalry of Europe in no painful service, because they required no change of life from men who were always roving, seems to forget the express testimony of history to the mourning and affliction of the crusaders in leaving their homes for these expeditions, which they undertook as a work meritorious.—Thus we behold one of them only persuaded after a long conversation with St. Bernard, who speaks to him on the passion of Christ, till, dissolved in a flood of tears, he conquers his preference of house and land, and resolves to take up the cross. Joinville, in quitting his home, cannot endure the sight of his ancestral towers, and so keeps his face turned from them.

But among the instances on record of the penitential spirit in which many of the crusaders departed for the Holy Land, there is none more striking than that of William, Count of Poitiers, who speaks as follows, before setting out for Palestine; “I wish to compose a chant, and the subject shall be that which causes my sorrow. I go into exile beyond sea, and I leave my beloved Poitiers and Limousin. I go beyond sea to the place where pilgrims implore their pardon. Adieu, brilliant tournaments! adieu, grandeur and magnificence, and all that is dear to my heart! Nothing can stop me. I go to the plains where God promises remission of sins. Pardon me, all you my companions, if I have ever offended you. I implore your pardon. I offer my repentance to Jesus, the master of heaven; to him I address my prayer. Too long have I been abandoned to worldly distractions; but the voice of the Lord has been heard. We must appear before his tribunal. I sink under the weight of my iniquities.”

I am not ignorant, indeed, with what bitter scorn and insulting censure the modern writers speak of the influence which occasioned this wondrous progress of nations to the East; but neither am I in doubt respecting their unreasonableness in so doing. Pope Urban II. in the Council of Claremont, conceding the indulgence to all who should join the enterprise which was to deliver Jerusalem from the yoke of the Saracens, made this provision, which is read in the second canon: “*Quicumque pro sola devotione, non pro honoris vel pecuniæ adeptione, ad liberandam ecclesiam Dei Jerusalem profectus fuerit, iter illud pro omni penitentia ei reputetur.*”—“Can one conceive, (asks Guizot,) that at present a people of proprietors would all of a sudden abandon their property and family, and leave their homes, without an absolute necessity, to seek such distant adventures? Nothing of this kind (he adds) would have been possible, had not the daily life of the possessors of fiefs been a kind of training for the crusades.”† Nor would it have been possible then, he might have added, if religion

\* Hom. Od. v. 114.

† Discours sur l'Hist. Mod. tom. iv. 5.

had not imparted a sanctity to mourning, and taught men to embrace such sufferings as meritorious. Besides, without taking into account what this author had elsewhere admitted, that the feudal life was favourable to domestic habits, and to the importance of women, it is a manifest truth, that by a law of nature and the very constitution of the human mind, men in general, with the exception of certain peculiar tribes, must in every age be similarly affected with regard to the love of home and of country. To be driven out from one's native land—a wanderer among foreign nations—seemed to the Greeks a greater punishment than death, and to be the appropriate penalty for an impious man.\* Before the influence of the universal Church had counteracted the pride and cruelty of the national spirit, which alienated man from man, the condition of a foreigner was truly wretched. St. Augustin says, that a man would rather keep company with his dog, than with another man who did not understand the language which he spoke.† And even had it been otherwise, who could be insensible to the feelings expressed by Hyppolytus, when he bids adieu to the land of his birth, the scene of his youthful sports, and the witness of his happy days? The Catholic religion, notwithstanding the universality of its sphere of action, had not destroyed or diminished these feelings. St. Ambrose, speaking of the eminent virtues of the patriarch Abraham, remarks in the first place the command which he received to go forth from his country, and from his acquaintances, and from his father's house, and then he adds, "It would have been sufficient to say from thy country," but the rest was added in order to prove his affection.‡ "Why do you fly?" asks St. Ambrose, addressing those who dreaded the advance of the barbarians. "Perhaps," he continues, "you fear captivity. Do you not know that this is the greatest captivity, not to behold your country? And what can be more grievous than the banishment of a journey."§ How well is that described by the great poet—who passed so many years of his own life in wandering—where, describing the first glimmering dawn, he adds,

——— "That breaks  
More welcome to the pilgrim still, as he  
Sojourns less distant on his homeward way."§

St. Bernard, in the age of the greatest fervour for pilgrimages, in the age of the crusades, himself the preacher of the crusade, reckons the love of our country among the fruits of justice.\*\* Judge then, from all this, whether the pilgrim in distant lands, who could say of himself, like Ulysses, that he had never entered his country since he first followed Godfrey or Richard to Jerusalem to help the Christians, but had always been wandering full of sorrows, that his constant wishes and expectation were to arrive at his home, and to see the day of return—

*οἰκαδέ τ' ἐλθέμεναι καὶ νόστιμον ἡμᾶρ ἰδεῖσθαι.††*

Whether, I say, this pilgrim, be he layman or priest, knight or palmer, ought not to have been reckoned among the tribe of mourners?

\* Eurip. Hyppolyt. 1050.

† S. Ambros. lib. de Abrah. Patriarch.

§ Purg. xxvii.

\*\* De Ordine Vitæ.

† De Civitate Dei, lib. xix. cap. 7.

‡ S. Ambrosii Serm. lxxxv.

†† Odyss. v. 220.



But let us note some details relative to the manner of their journey, and to the consolations afforded them on the way.

Before setting out, the pilgrim provided himself with a commendatory letter, called a letter of communion, which was composed so as to prevent the possibility of its being forged. These letters used to be given, not only to all clerks who travelled to a different diocese, and who, by the canons of the Council of Tours, in the year 461, were prohibited from travelling without them, but also to all laymen, in evidence of their being at peace with the Church: for as Optatus Milevitanus says, "The whole world was formed into one society and communion."\* Thus the testimonial of Catholic faith answered to the σύμβολα, or Tessera of the ancients, which were tokens of hospitality, made so that a person, by producing one piece, might be recognised by another who had its corresponding part. Jason tells Medea that he will give her these symbols to insure for her an hospitable reception from his friends in the country to which she is going.† Thomassinus alludes to this subject in treating on hospitality, to whose observations the reader may refer.

Humility, simplicity, and charity, characterised the pilgrim's way. In the old fabliaux of the two rich citizens and the labourer, the former going on a pilgrimage, and being joined by a peasant, they all three travel on lovingly together, and join their provisions in a common stock. The duty of the Teutonic knights as pilgrims was denoted on the seal of their order, which represented the mother of Christ seated on an ass, holding the infant Jesus in her arms, with Joseph walking and leading the animal, the star going before them as when they fled into Egypt.‡ Little difficulties were not to interrupt the course. "The morning rain stops not the pilgrim," is the proverb we have derived from these ages. In the rules given to the Knight Templars, they were directed to travel two or three together, and when they came to any place in which there was a house belonging to the order, they were obliged to take up their lodging there with the brethren, and they were directed to provide themselves with a light, which should be kept burning during the night near where they slept. "When you go on a journey, (says St. Bonaventura) live in great peace with him whom the superior will have given to you for a companion. Never engage in any dispute with him, although you should be in the right, but yield to him with tranquillity, and keep silence, because it is seldom that any one is convicted by disputing, or made to change his opinion. Preserve your own peace, that you may give peace to others, and begin by appeasing yourself, and then you may appease him; because, what you would say in trouble and agitation to him who is troubled and agitated, would only trouble and agitate him the more; and you will more easily win him by your gentleness and patience, than by all the reasons you could alledge; for virtue is not taught by vice, nor humility by pride. Be accommodating and agreeable on the journey, but without dissipation or compromise of your duty."||

Monks, like minor friars, were bound to travel two and two. On their way they were commanded to show respect to every one, and to

\* Vide Joan. Devoti Institut. Canonic. lib. ii.

† Voigt Geschichte Preussens, ii. 57.

‡ S. Bonaventuræ de Reformat. Hominis exter. cap. 36.

† Eurip. Medea, 613.

salute all strangers whom they met, to take every occasion of consoling, instructing, and edifying those in whose company they found themselves, and never to show harshness or rudeness in reproving such as acted wrong in their presence; but to admonish them with gentleness and humility, so that in this way going through the world, they might literally accomplish the order of Jesus Christ, to preach the gospel to every creature. St. Martin converted a robber who happened to travel along with him. They were always to endeavour to arrive at the place of sleeping before late, that there might be no hurry to themselves or inconvenience to their hosts.\* Monks on a journey were advised to take little books with them, and Mabillon describes the volumes for this purpose, which were in a monastery of Cistercians. St. Gregory the Great says, "that the Abbot Æquitius used to carry sacred pages in leather cases on each of his sides."† There were books expressly composed for the pilgrims, containing prayers, and hymns, and litanies suitable to their engagement. The moral work entitled *Le Dialogue du Crucifix et du Pèlerin*, was written by one of these pilgrims, William Alexis, the humble prior of the monastery of Bury, in the diocese of Evreux. He wrote it in the year 1486, at the request, as he says himself, "of some pilgrims of Rouen, who were with him on the holy voyage, for their spiritual consolation, and to excite them to devotion and patience."‡ Gouget observes, "that it is a most pious work, and that the author had always in view the engagements of his state."† Companies of pilgrims travelling together recited the psalms and sung litanies on the way.

St. Gerard, bishop of Toule, made a pilgrimage to Rome for the sake of devotion. So leaving not a little substance for the support of the poor, he set out on his journey with twelve companions of the clerical and monastic order, who with him might continually chant psalms or jublations. They seemed to make the whole road to Rome one church, the standard of the cross always preceding them. Who could describe the abundant alms which they dispensed on the way? Upon arriving at Pavia, they were received by the holy Maiolus abbot of Cluny,‡ and the blessed Adhelbert, who was afterwards a martyr.|| "O what spiritual exultation was theirs! What conversation on the supernal kingdom ever to be desired! What divine discourse upon the divine word! Each hung upon the other's lips. Each believed that he heard Christ in the other, who certainly dwelled in them."§ When pious travellers entered a town, they used to visit first all the places of devotion which it contained; then they used to offer their alms to the hospitals, and serve the poor that were in them. In the time of Petrarch, when the emperor Charles and the empress came to Rome to be crowned on Easter Sunday, arriving there on Maunday Thursday, on the two following days, he visited the churches in a pilgrim's habit. Many travellers of the modern school feel themselves strangers and aliens as they pass through the nations of the Catholic church, and seem as if never to be at ease, or capable of perfect refreshment, till they arrive at that little city of Calvin, where the law at present forbids men to proclaim the divinity

\* S. Bonaventuræ *Speculum Novitiorum*, cap. 29. 31.

† *Bibliothèque Française*, tom. x. 119. ‡ Who ruled from the year 948 to 994.

|| Bishop of Prague, crowned with martyrdom in the year 997.

§ *Acta Tullensium Episcoporum apud Marten. Thesaur. Anecd. tom. iii.*

of Christ; but the pilgrim of the middle ages had the consolation of finding his home in every church which he passed on the way. Every where he found the same holy rites, the same language which had been familiar to him from childhood. Did his heart for a moment fail at the thought of his course being unaccomplishable, and did the memory of home and the prospect of danger prompt him to return without seeing the place of his desire? in prayer, at the foot of the altar, he gathered fresh strength and courage to continue on his way, for he felt as if he were then but for the first moment setting out from home. The *Missa Sicca* or *Nautica* used to be celebrated on ship-board. When St. Louis was a prisoner in the hands of the Sarassins, he had a *Missa Sicca* celebrated in his presence. The rubic prescribed that the priest should be clad as usual in the sacred vestments; that he should read the mass till the preface; that the canon was to be omitted; that the pater-noster was then to be said; but that all the secrets were to be omitted, and that neither chalice nor host was to be on the altar. In later ages Pope Benedict XIV. gave permission to have mass said on board the ships of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, provided the sea was calm and the sky serene.\* Guido de Monte Rocherii, who wrote about the year 1333, approves of the custom of celebrating a *Missa Sicca* before travellers who should arrive late and after the priest had said his mass. In this case he says, "that the priest after reading the mass of the day, should show relics instead of continuing the canon." Even in desolate and benighted regions, religion supplied the wanderer with an idea which served as a substitute for home: for, as the Athenian general said to his soldiers in his affecting speech on the retreat from Syracuse, "that they were to consider it as if they themselves, wherever they happened to rest on the way, immediately constituted the city,"† so these bands of Catholic pilgrims, when they had to traverse infidel lands, were consoled with remembering, that wherever the hand of Providence might conduct their steps, they were themselves holy Sion and the walls of Jerusalem.

Bounty to the poor was the virtue more than all others pre-eminently to distinguish the pilgrims, who never forgot that it was when travelling the good Samaritan practised that memorable work of charity, and that a hostel was the scene of it. The joy and devotion expressed by pilgrims on first coming in sight of Jerusalem or Rome, or the temple of their vow, was a subject which has employed the genius of the noblest poets and painters. Clarke thus describes his first view of Jerusalem: "Hagiopolis!" exclaimed a Greek in the van of our cavalcade, and instantly throwing himself from his horse, was seen upon his knees bare-headed. Suddenly the sight burst upon us all. The effect produced was that of perfect silence throughout the whole company. Many of our party, by an immediate impulse, took off their hats as if entering a church, without being sensible of so doing. The Greeks and Catholics shed torrents of tears; presently beginning to cross themselves with unfeigned devotion, they asked if they might be permitted to take off the covering from their feet, and proceed bare-footed to the holy sepulchre. We had not been prepared for the grandeur of the spectacle which

---

\* Benedict, xiv. de *Sacrificio Missæ* ii. 48.

† Lib. vii. 77.



the city alone exhibited." So also we read, that after the first transports of joy on beholding Jerusalem, deep repentance succeeded through the whole host of the crusaders, for Tasso, at this point, closely follows history.

"Scantly they durst their feeble eyes dispread  
Upon that town, where Christ was sold and bought;  
Where, for our sins, he, faultless, suffered pain,  
There where he died, and where he liv'd again.  
Soft words, low speech, deep sobs, sweet sighs, salt tears,  
Rose from their breasts, with joy and pleasure mixt:  
For thus fares he the Lord aright that fears,  
Fear on devotion, joy on faith is fixt:  
Their naked feet trod on the dusty way,  
Following th' ensample of their zealous guide;  
Their scarfs, their crests, their plumes and feathers gay,  
They quickly doft, and willing laid aside."\*

The hill whence the pilgrims gain the first view of St. James of Compostello, is called Montjoye, or Mons Gaudii. The number and devotion of the pilgrims at various holy places would be so great, that whole towns used to spring up and be established in consequence. At St. Maur, it used to be a great privilege to the inhabitants, who alone had the right to sell candles to the pilgrims for the procession.† The greatest concourse was always at the principal festival, celebrated at that particular place. Never shall I lose the memory of the devout multitude which flocked to the Seraphic mountain of Alvernio, when that simple and joyous family of Christ, dwelling there in great innocence, and ministering in all things to strangers, commemorated the stigmata of its blessed founder. Thither came men and women, old and young, rich and poor, and all entered as if it were into their own house, so sure was the humblest pilgrim of receiving food, and fire, and welcome. Then when the bell sounded for the first vespers, this throng of pilgrims which had filled the courts, and cloisters, and corridors, and halls of the convent, hastened into the church, where they met before the altar like one family. On the evening of the next day, which closed the pious solemnity, these pilgrims descended from the mountain, if not like St. Francis, bearing the signs of our redemption on their bodies, yet assuredly as far as one could judge from their saintly looks and by their whole demeanour, having the cross in their hearts imprinted by the Spirit of God. Sometimes, without regard to particular festivals, the penitential seasons of the ecclesiastical year were spent in these pious journeys. King Robert of France used to spend whole Lents on pilgrimages.

With respect to the assistance afforded to pilgrims on their way, there are some facts which deserve notice. In the eye not only of religion but of the state, they were privileged persons. In the remarkable letter of Canute to the bishops and nation of England, after describing his pilgrimage to Rome, he mentions having taken occasion to obtain from the emperor Conrad and other princes, an exemption for all his subjects who should make the pilgrimage to Rome, that they might not be detained at the barriers, nor subjected to any exactions on their way.

---

\* Book iii.

† Lebeuf, *Hist. du Diocèse de Paris*, tom. v.

"As for pilgrims," says a capitulary of Pepin-le-bref, "who make a pilgrimage with a view to God, let no toll be demanded from them."\* In the year 1358, Rudolph Archduke of Austria and Lord of Rappersweil, undertook the amazing work of erecting a bridge over the lake of Zurich, though the breadth in that place is eighteen hundred paces. This was done in order to assist the pilgrims who were travelling to Einsiedelin, as they used frequently to be prevented from crossing the lake by storms which opposed the fulfilment of their pious vows.† The erection of hostels for the reception of pilgrims was a work of charity to which communities and individuals devoted themselves. Cities and private persons made foundations to procure asylums for their fellow townsmen in places of pilgrimage, or for such as were on their way thither. In the year 1752, the magistrates of Avignon wrote to the council of Rheims, to say that every native of Rheims or of Champagne passing by their city had a right to be nourished during three days, and to receive an ecu on proceeding forward.‡ At Lille, we read of two ancient hospitals for the pilgrims. There were five at Douai, and there was one at each of the towns of Orchies, Armentiers, and Seclin, where the gray sisters and other pious persons exercised hospitality.|| In the year 1353, several hostels were founded at Einsiedelin, for the gratuitous reception of pilgrims, rich and poor, who were all to be received without respect of person, for God's sake.§ At Freyburg, in Switzerland, shortly after entering the city from the side of Germany, and before ascending the steep hill, you see the small ancient hostel for the pilgrims of St. James of Compostello. The image of a pilgrim with his bottle, cockle hat, and staff, stands in a gothic niche over the door. At Paris there was the hospital of St. James to receive pilgrims who should be going to Compostello. Some thought that it had been founded by Charlemagne, but it was not established till the year 1315, and it was the work of some Parisians, who, having made this pilgrimage, and wishing to perpetuate the memory of it, formed themselves into a fraternity. Every year on the first Monday after the festival of St. James the Greater, the brethren assembled in the church of the hospital, and made a solemn procession with the staff of a pilgrim in one hand and a lighted taper in the other. Over the gate of this hospital of St. James was the following inscription: "Nullos fundatores ostento, quia humiles, quia plures, quorum nomina tabella non caperet, cælum recipit; vis illis inseri? vestem præbe, panem frange pauperibus peregrinis."\*\* In the great hospital of the Knights of St. John, at Paris, there was an immense square tower which contained four vast halls, one over the other, furnished with beds for the pilgrims of Jerusalem, and for the sick who asked hospitality.†† At Milan, Barnabo Visconti founded an hospice for the entertainment of pilgrims. At Rome, besides the vast hospital for pilgrims where every one is received, there were a multitude of similar foundations, though of a confined nature, which were of

\* Cap. Pipp. A. 755. Baluz. tom. i. col. 175.

† Einsiedlische Chronik by Tschudi 73. ‡ Anquetil, Hist. de Rheims, lib. iii.

|| Hist. des Saints de Lille, Douai, &c. 672. § Tschudi Einsiedlische Chronik, 69.

\*\* De Saint-Victor, Tableau de Paris, tom. ii. p. 490.

†† Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, i. 6.

great antiquity. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit still bears a name from its proximity to the hospice, which had been founded for their countrymen by our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. Alfred was the founder of this house, which, on the change of religion in England, was converted by the Catholics into a college. The French had also their hospitium for French pilgrims; and there was an hospitium for foreign secular priests of all nations who should be travelling. But, as connected with great events and illustrious titles, no foundation was so remarkable as the Pilgrim's Hospital at Jerusalem, which gave rise to a renowned order, whose fame must endure as long as the world lasts. The Bull of Pope Honorius III., speaks of it in these terms: "Those who, with various perils by sea, visit, through devotion, the holy city, and the sepulchre of our Lord, know well how dear to God, and how venerable to men, is that place which affords an agreeable and useful asylum for strangers, and for the poor in the German Hospital of St. Mary at Jerusalem: for there the indigent and the poor are refreshed, obsequious attention is paid to the sick, and they who have been fatigued by diverse labours and dangers are restored and refreshed; and in order that they may proceed with greater security to the holy places, sanctified by the corporal presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, there are brethren especially appointed, at the expense of that hospital, to wait upon them."

The hostels, or inns, which have succeeded in most places to these ancient foundations of charity, have, in Catholic countries, still retained an aspect which gives them an interest in the estimation of devout or of romantic travellers. The inkeeper of the middle ages took care to have holy images in the apartments of his hostel for his guests. There was a room, or at least a table, separate for persons who were excommunicated.\* All which did not prevent persons from fancying, that there were some inns which the demon had kept, and which were served by his imps. The very signs of inns continued to favour the idea that every journey was a pilgrimage; for such were the associations connected with images of the three kings, of the flight into Egypt, and of the pilgrim, which were so generally placed over the gate to invite the traveller to pull his rein. At Bacione, the last stage to Rome, there is a lone huge inn, which, from the throng and variety of guests, may remind one of a pilgrims' hostel; and on the bleak, wild mountain of Radicoffani, there is another solitary inn, in which is a chapel, where mass is said. Arriving here on the festival of St. Michael, I had the happiness of finding that a priest was just arrived for the purpose of saying mass, and all the people of the inn proceeded to assist at it with great devotion. Arriving about the Ave Maria, at any inn in the states of the church, where one so often meets companies of ecclesiastics travelling, the sound of their solemn voices, repeating their holy office aloud, seems to impart to the inn the sanctity of a cloister, and consoles the solitary pilgrim, who can feel himself as if domesticated under a holy roof; while the sacred dramatic show, which sometimes succeeds during supper, completes the charm, at least in the estimation of one who seeks in travelling, not luxury, but the simple and holy manners of the antique world. Lord Marmion's train arriving at the hostel

---

\* Monteil, *Hist. des Français*, tom. iii. 487.



where the palmer sits by the fire, furnishes the poet with a picture, of which the colouring denotes a more northern clime, though the substance is familiar to us all—

“Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,  
With jingling spurs the court-yard rung;  
Soon by the chimney’s merry blaze,  
Through the rude hostel might you gaze;  
Might see where, in the dark nook aloof,  
The rafters of the sooty roof  
Bore wealth of winter cheer;  
Of sea-fowl dried, and Soland’s store,  
And gammons of the tusky boar,  
And savoury haunch of deer.”

But not merely in the inns and hostels was the pilgrim a welcome guest: every where alike, whether to the cottage, or to the castle, he might direct his steps, at any hour of the day or night, and feel secure of meeting with a kind reception. No where in a Catholic land would he find the *φυγάς*, whom Pindar mentions; nor the “stranger-hating house,” which Admetus speaks of in the Greek play. As in the primitive days of Christian society, if a stranger showed that he professed the orthodox faith, and was in the communion of the Church, he was received with open arms wherever he went. To have refused him entrance would have been thought the same thing as to have rejected Jesus Christ himself.\* Even without any knowledge of his character, the wanderer was admitted to hospitality; and the general sentiment of the host, on such occasions, may be learned from chivalrous tales, as from that of Gyron le Courtois; for we read there, that when Danayn le Roux and his varlet were riding one night in the forests, they espied a fire in the distance, and coming up to it, they found that it came from a tent, in which a knight was lodging with his company. The squire went up to the knight in the tent, and said, “Sir knight, here is a knight all armed, and we do not know what he wishes to say.” “Bien soit il venu,” replied their lord, “par adventure vouldra il ceste nuyte demourer avecques nous. Se il est preudhomme, moult en suis lye et joyeux de sa compaignie avoir, et se il est autre, Dieu le conseille. Sa bonte le conduyra, et sa mauvaistrie luy demourra quant il se partira de nous.”† The church took the lead here. St. Hildegard styles Pope Eugene, “The Father of Strangers.”‡ In fact, at Rome, on Maunday Thursday, the holy father shows himself the servant of strangers, repairing to the hospital of the poor pilgrims, who have come thither from every clime, and there humbly ministering to wash their feet. To secure the protection, not alone of pilgrims, but of all persons who travelled through the world, was a constant object of solicitude with the Holy See, and various councils raised their solemn voice to further it, in opposition to local abuses, and even to the civil legislation. Vincent of Beauvais cites a Council of Lateran, which says, “They who with damnable cupidity pillage the substance of Christians suffering shipwreck, whom, by the rule of faith, they are bound to assist, become subject to excommunication, unless they restore what they have taken. Nothing must

\* Benedict xiv. De Canonizatione Servorum Dei, lib. i.

† S Hildegardi Epist. i.

‡ F. 411.

be taken from shipwrecked persons, whether found on sea or on shore ; nor will any custom, statute, or prescription, excuse offenders in this case ; for it is against the precept of our Lord, who says, ‘Do unto others what you would they should do unto you.’”\*

In the year 1377, Archbishop Albert, of Prussia, published a charge, for the utility of the faithful navigating, to declare that such persons, merchants, or others, are placed under the protection of the Apostolic See ; and, in the event of any of them suffering shipwreck, to call upon all who are near to bear them assistance, for God’s sake, and for the sake of natural equity, and as they would wish to be themselves assisted in similar circumstances.† Even in times of war, pilgrims always found an efficient protection in being under the safeguard of the Holy See, which gave them free liberty to pass into hostile nations. We must hope, therefore, for the honour of Buccleugh, that no credit need be paid to the old harper, who sings of the Lady of Branksome, gathering a band to surprise Lord Cranstoun, as he went on pilgrimage to the chapel on the edge of St. Mary’s Lake. The general obligation of respecting and succouring the stranger was an express precept of the Almighty to his chosen people ; and it was a primeval tradition, which we find transmitted in the writings of many of the ancients. “Advenam non contristabis, neque affliges eum,” is the command to the Jews,‡ which is elsewhere repeated. “Advena sit inter vos, quasi indigena ; et diligetis eum quasi vosmetipsos.”|| And the Athenian, in Plato, observes that offences against a stranger, or host, are visited with a more severe punishment from Heaven than those committed against one’s own countryman, of which the reason is given, in the following most amiable words, which savour not the least of modern political economists—  
*ἐχνημος γὰρ ὦν ὁ ξένος ἐταίρων τε καὶ ξυγγενῶν ἐλεεινότερος ἀνδράποισι καὶ θεοῖς.*§

But to return to the pilgrim, and to view him seated beneath the hospitable roof. Those vast chimneys of the feudal castle, over which used often to be carved the hunting of St. Hubert ; and in which a whole cart-load of wood used to be burnt every day in winter, used to hear strange variety of sweet and solemn words,—the song of the page, the counsels of the chaplain, the fable of the troubadour, the wanderings of the palmer and his woes. What were those pilgrims’ tales of which the men in our age speak so scornfully ? Were they related by men resembling, indeed, those wanderers, who used to visit Ithaca, of whom the swine-herd says, in Homer, that they are apt to lie, nor do they wish to tell truth ; but they have always some idle stories about Ulysses, by means of which they hope to gain the favour of Penelope ; and she loves them, and, weeping, asks them a thousand questions,\*\* or, like these modern writers of travels, these narrators of scandal, and calumniators of Catholic nations, who, if they were honest, might say with the Sycophant, in Plautus—

“Advenio ex Seleucia, Macedonia, Asia, atque Arabia,

Quas ego neque oculis, neque pedibus unquam usurpavi meis.”††

Ah, no ! it was a different race of men from all these. In their journeys

\* Speculum Doctrinale, lib. x. cap. 62.

† Voigt Geschichte Preussens iii. 509.

‡ Exod. xxii.

|| Levit. xix.

§ Plato de Legibus, lib. v.

\*\* Od. xiv. 125.

†† Trinummus iv. 2.

they were never to affect to bear news, however good and probable: "For," as St. Bonaventura said, "it was not the part of religious men to be news-bearers. The wise man had given them this precept, 'Avoid spreading reports, lest men should say you are the authors of them.'"\* "Let him who wishes to hear good news," says a great writer of the time, "hear Christ speaking concerning the kingdom of God, the future judgment, the heavenly Jerusalem, the felicity of the supernal citizens, the eternal rejoicing of the angelic choirs. Let him hear the prophets announcing the mysteries of Christ, and denouncing penalty against sinners; let him hear the apostles and evangelists relating the works and miracles of Christ; let him hear the doctors and other masters beautifully discoursing, expounding the happy way, and refuting errors."† Their journeys had no features to amuse the profligate, like those which belonged to that famous voyage to Brundisium, to the account of which the moderns are never tired listening. Travellers of the modern discipline would have had nothing to fear from landing upon Scythian Taurus, while the Temple of Diana stood, if the daughter of Agamemnon said true, that nothing but what was holy could ever be offered to the goddess. She would refuse to sacrifice any one of these men, saying—

οὐ καθαρὸν ὄντα· τὸν δ' ὅστιον δώσω φόνει.‡

But the case would have been different in the middle ages; for the wandering scholar-boy, or the hoary palmer, would then have touched there to enrich the poet's mournful themes; and, therefore, the tales and discourse of those who had avoided that danger would be pure as the oracles of God. Their conversation also, though relative to foreign lands, had nothing to recommend it to the ears of that race of men most foolish, as the poet styles them, "who always vituperate things domestic, and look on all sides for distant objects, seeking vain things with idle hope."|| Their devout and solemn narrations suited not the children of vanity, nor those who had not their treasure with them; yet, though it was far from the gentle pilgrim to be a common laughter, still, as St. Bonaventura prescribes to the monk, in lodging with seculars on his journey, he was to be simple and humble, gentle without flattery, gay and affable without dissipation. It was his duty to moderate, on these occasions, the austerity of his manners; and for the sake of charity and honest utility, to lay aside his gravity for a time.§

To judge merely from what occurs in our age, it would be impossible to understand or credit the interest which these pilgrims could inspire in every circle of listeners, whose attention to their tales they craved, for Christ's dear Church's sake. Of all descriptions of men at present, the traveller is, perhaps, the most insipid and disgusting; it seems as if he can only add the description of eating and drinking to the common-place narrations which are to be found in every library made up of scandal, reviling of holy things, calumny and pretended discoveries in the intrigues of government, and in the science of economy; and besides this, if travellers were themselves of a higher order, men would be wanting in feeling to appreciate them: they would rather trust their pompous

\* S. Bonaventuræ Speculum Novitiorum, cap. 32.

† Thomas à Kempis, Hortulus Rosarum, cap. 12.

‡ Pindar, Pyth. Od. iii.

§ Vol. II.—30.

† Eurip. Iph. in Taur. 1029.

§ Id. cap. 31.



journals than their unpretending guest. The truth is, that religion is the source of all deep and powerful interest, so that where there is no religion, there can be no really intense intellectual interest experienced on any subject; for, let the understanding be ever so anxious to create one, the heart will still prove, on its demands, a cold and powerless organ. Hence, no one now has sufficient regard for a wanderer, as even to ask him, in the Homeric style—

*τίς πρόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; πρόθε τοι πόλις ἡδὲ τοκῆες;\**

It is only, How stood the exchange, and what majority had ministers?—or, rather, ten to one it is, if possible, more prosaic still,—what money have you in your purse? But in ages of faith, when the hearts of men overflowed with the love of Christ, when in thought and in the deepest affection of their souls they ever stood on Calvary, and wept at the holy sepulchre, no sweeter moment was there than that in which they listened to the pilgrims describing the wonders of Jerusalem. To hear of Rome, too,—of sacred Rome,—and of Christ's vicar, who meekly sways the race of pre-elected men, full of reverence and amaze, desire in their minds grew with satiety. He it was who could tell of such things that held both keys to their heart, turning the wards, opening and shutting with a skill so sweet that besides him into their inmost breast scarce any other could admittance find. As Martial says to a Roman, who was with him in the country, “*Romam tu mihi sola facis;*” so, he who had been in these sacred places was to them Rome and Jerusalem; and, like the Abbess of St. Hilda, they would style him holy Palmer; for, surely, they would add—

“——— He must be sainted man,  
Whose blessed feet have trod the ground  
Where the Redeemer's tomb is found.”

His very face was as a book, where men might read strange, mournful, yet beatific things. The ideal of noble chivalry, with all its sufferings, seem united there with that of the saintly life: and, in fact, the knightly pilgrim, like the Ulysses of the Odyssey, seems to be more in his genuine element when wandering in the midst of adventures and tempests, and in disguise, than when openly counselling and fighting on the plains of Asia. In Marmion, we have a fine description of the palmer, when Young Selby proposes that this stranger should be Lord Marmion's guide—

“Here is a holy palmer come,  
From Salem first, and last from Rome:  
One that hath kiss'd the blessed tomb,  
And visited each holy shrine,  
In Araby and Palestine;  
On hills of Armenie hath been,  
Where rest of ark may yet be seen;  
By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,  
Which parted at the prophet's rod;  
In Sinai's wilderness he saw  
The mount where Israel heard the law;  
He shows Saint James's cockle-shell;  
Of fair Montserrat, too, can tell;  
And of that grot where olives nod—

---

\* Od. xiv. 187.

Where, darling of each heart and eye,  
 From all the youth of Sicily,  
 Saint Rosalie retired to God.  
 To stout Saint George, of Norwich merry;  
 St. Thomas, too, of Canterbury;  
 Cuthbert, of Durham; and Saint Bede,  
 For his sins' pardon hath he prayed.  
 He knows the passes of the north,  
 And seeks for shrines beyond the Forth;  
 Little he eats, and long will wake,  
 And drinks but of the stream or lake:  
 This were a guide o'er moor or lake."

The English knight approves of the plan, and says, that he loves such holy wanderers, who can always cheer the way with some legendary strain; but young Selby, with an altered countenance, and finger laid on his lip, intimates that he is, perhaps, an over solemn and mysterious guide; and he is going on to describe his air and manner, when Mar-mion interrupts him, and says, that he will have no other guide but the palmer—

"So please you, gentle youth, to call  
 This palmer to the castle-hall.  
 The summon'd palmer came in place—  
 His sable cowl o'er-hung his face:  
 In his black mantle was he clad,  
 With Peter's keys, in cloth of red,  
 On his broad shoulders wrought;  
 The scallop-shell his cap did deck;  
 The crucifix around his neck  
 Was from Loretto brought;  
 His sandals were with travel tore—  
 Staff, budget, bottle, scrip he wore;  
 The faded palm-branch in his hand  
 Show'd pilgrim from the holy land.  
 When, as the palmer came in hall,  
 Nor lord, nor knight, was there more tall  
 Or had a statelier step withal,  
 Or look'd more high and keen;  
 But his gaunt frame was worn with toil,  
 His cheek was sunk, alas, the while!  
 Poor wretch! the mother that him bare,  
 If she had been in presence there,  
 In his wan face and sun-burnt hair,  
 She had not known her child.  
 Danger, long travel, want, or woe,  
 Soon change the form that best we know."

The palmer consents to guide the knight, but observes that they must set out with morning-tide, adding—

"For I have solemn vows to pay,  
 And may not linger by the way,  
 To fair St. Andrew's bound,  
 Within the ocean-cave to pray,  
 Where good St. Rule his holy lay,  
 From midnight to the dawn of day,  
 Sung to the billows' sound."

The remembrance of the palmer might turn our thoughts to muse upon the Platonic notion of the pilot, where Socrates explains what renders him so conscious of the little value of his services to those whom he

guides over the watery way; for, if that passage be compared with the description of the saintly wanderer, there will be found the same countenance and language in them both. The latter guides the knight, and seems not to imagine that he has performed any great office; he participates in his sufferings and success; and, though full of charity, yet, whether he sees him cast down or elevated, he changes not his tone. Alike to him seem the prosperous and adverse course of his companion; he rejoices with him as though he rejoiced not; and enables him to see at length the day of return, and no sound of congratulation passes his lips. What is this but the same phenomena which Socrates observed in the pilot? "Witness the pilot," says he, "by whose skill our lives and properties are preserved from such great danger; and yet how modest he is and humble, and how far from making great boast, as if he could perform any thing wonderful; but if he preserves us safe coming from Ægina, he only demands two obols; and if he leads us back safe from Ægypt or Pontus, with our sons and wives and riches, he asks but two drachms; and the man who possesses this art, and who can perform these things, goes down to the shore, and walks by the sea-side about his ship, in a lowly unassuming manner; for he perceives, I think, that it is very uncertain whether he has done a service or an injury to those whom he has saved from being drowned in the waves, knowing that he has put them on shore no better in body or soul than when he received them into his ship; he considers, then, that if any one, pressed with incurable maladies of body hath been saved by his means from perishing in the sea, the same is to be pitied, and has received no benefit from his hands; and if any one should have many incurable maladies in his soul, which is so much more precious than the body, it will be of no utility to him to preserve him from the sea; for he knows that it is not for the advantage of a wicked man to continue to live, since he must needs live ill; therefore, there is no law to ordain that a pilot should be honoured, although he saves us."\*

Many instances are on record of persons of profligate lives having been subdued and converted by a casual meeting with these holy wanderers, whose dignified and saintly presence would strike even brute violence with adoration and blank awe. Here, again, one's thoughts may return to what is told in pages of the old philosophy; for we read that, when Pythagoras descended from the sacred top of Carmel, where he had remained in solitary meditation, arriving at a bark, he uttered nothing but these words, *Εἰς Αἴγυπτον ὁ ἀπόπλους;* Are you bound for Egypt? And they answering in the affirmative, he embarked, and remained silent during the whole voyage, for two nights and three days eating nothing, and constantly composed and motionless, so that the sailors concluded it was a demon that passed from Syria into Egypt; and they were careful to utter no bad words among themselves, and to abstain from all impropriety till they had set him safe on shore."† The licentious songster, or the rude and worldly knight, the lover of wine and minstrelsy, bent perhaps upon some dark deed, would little suppose that the palmer's presence could interrupt their merriment, yet, when confronted with him, "how would one look from his majestic brow, seated as on the

---

\* Plato Gorgias.

† Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita. cap. 3.



top of virtue's hill, discountenance them, despised, and put to rout all their array."

It was not necessary to ascribe to the palmer that knowledge of more than could be learned by holy lore, of which young Selby spoke, in order to account for the solemn and half terrific scene at the hostel hearth—

"Resting upon his pilgrim staff,  
Right opposite the palmer stood :  
His thin dark visage seen but half—  
Half hidden by his hood.  
Still fix'd on Marmion was his look,  
Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,  
Strove by a frown to quell ;  
But not for that, though more than once  
Full met their stern encountering glance,  
The palmer's visage fell."

His silence was a commentary which made the song of Fitz-Eustace fall sad on Marmion's ear ; and when at length he spoke, though it was only these words, "The death of a dear friend,"

"Marmion, whose steady heart and eye  
Ne'er changed in worst extremity ;  
Marmion, whose soul could scantily brook,  
Even from his king, a haughty look ;  
Whose accent of command controll'd  
In camps the boldest of the bold—  
Thought, look, and utterance fail'd him now,  
Fall'n was his glance, and flush'd his brow :  
For either in the tone,  
Or something in the palmer's look,  
So full upon his conscience strook,  
That answer he found none."

But it is time to return to our antique chronicles in search of instances that will illustrate the manner of a pilgrim's life from real history. An abstract of the narrative of Brother Nicole, the Carmelite, will, perhaps, supply what is yet wanting in our conception of this character in the middle ages, and with this testimony the present chapter shall conclude. "In the prologue, he states that he has accomplished this very holy and meritorious voyage, by the mercy of our sweet Jesus. I wish (he adds) to make known these noble and glorious places, to warn you to be mindful of our Lord Jesus, and that this book may be an amusement to many lords and ladies, who are curious to inquire respecting the land of promise. What I have seen, I will declare, to the best of my poor ability ; and though this treatise be vile, and in need of much correction, nevertheless I pray all readers or hearers, who shall have made the same pilgrimage, if they should find any thing here contrary to our holy faith, that they will dispose it in good order through charity in honour of Jesus our Lord ; for I protest that, neither in this present treatise, nor in any other which I have made, or may hereafter make, do I pretend to say or write any thing whatsoever which should be against faith or good manners ; and I pray them, therefore, by charity, to correct my labours ; for, whatever is presented, ought to be well arranged." Speaking of the holy sepulchre in Jerusalem, he says, "So often as any one being faithful, or loyal in faith, enters within to contemplate the place, as

many times does he behold, with the eyes of his mind, our Saviour Jesus there entombed." And speaking of Golgotha, he exclaims, "O, great God, who hast delivered us from hell and from eternal death, is there a spot on the earth more glorious, more virtuous, more worthy of honour!" These are places which many Catholics kiss, shedding torrents of tears. The devout visitation of the holy places leads to holy meditation, to good resolutions of amendment, and to compunction for sin; and, in my judgment, there is no Catholic pilgrim who does not return more virtuous, better, more perfect than he ever was before. What Christian, on entering that holy land, is not dissolved in tears? Who is there that will not feel compunction, when merely from beholding that region, hearts are pierced, and laid bare with wondrous sighs? Let a man be ever so wicked, it is impossible but that he must be changed at the mere view of what is before him. Sainte et salutaire progression et très meriteire peregrination oultre la mer en Hierusalem: qui souffira a dicter a value! Who is there that does not desire to amend his life, and to do penance for the time which he has lost, when he beholds before his eyes things so wondrous, and so calculated to incite to virtuous deeds! There, without doubt, is the grace of God diffused and imparted to all souls who do not place obstacles in its way by a malignant will. "Persons in all ages," he continues, "have travelled far to see places and men that deserved reverence, witness Pythagoras, and Plato, and the noble queen Saba, and now we know, that after all the labours of men under the sun, one thing, and one thing alone is necessary to know, Jesus Christ crucified, and risen again, and ascended into heaven; and therefore St. Paul declares that he desires to know and to write nothing but only Jesus, and to glory in nothing but in his cross, by whom we are saved and delivered; therefore no longer do any wise men glory in their wisdom, or in their riches, or power, or virtue, but all remember what St. John saith in his gospel, 'that eternal life is to know one only sovereign God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.' And although to attain this holy and salutary science, the gospel and the apostolic writings, and the daily preaching and proclaiming of the faith be widely sufficient, nevertheless to this not a little may contribute the said pilgrimage and the beholding of the holy places through simple love for our sweet Jesus, who in dying, has destroyed our death. Therefore, for the present, I conclude with St. Jerome, 'that to have been in Jerusalem is not a very holy thing, but to have lived devoutly in Jerusalem, virtuously in holy conversation amidst a perverse generation, is to be praised, and renders the pilgrim worthy of renown.' After many vanities, alas, when the flower of my age had been lost, I began to consider the follies in which I had long slept; and the grace of Jesus awakening me to a sense of the worldly vanities by which I had been going to eternal perdition, I resolved from thenceforth to render testimony to the justice of the commandments of God and of my holy religion. I set out on my pilgrimage from the convent of Ponteau, in the diocese of Rouen. The reverend master Prior of the said convent, Geoffroy the Recluse, with a great company of the brethren of the convent, conducted me, during the space of three days, till we came to Chartres: en larmes et en pleurs fut nostre departement. There I waited for the setting out of a nobleman who is now a knight, the Seig-

neur de la Mouriniere, with whom I set out in Easter week, 1487, and rode through Savoy and Turin, till we reached Venice for the festival of St. Mark. We took up our lodging at the Savage Man in St. Mark's Place. Here we found many noblemen and clerks of France, some of whom joined our company, and among them was a Seigneur de Rochefort from Auvergne, and also there came to us a gracious and wise child, a native of Lyon, called Sir Henry de Encharmois. At Venice, they agreed with the patron of the galley, who was to supply all their expenses of journeying and food during the whole pilgrimage, both from and back to Venice, and each pilgrim was to pay him forty fresh ducats, half at Venice and the other half at Jaffa. He remarks, that at Cyprus one could procure twelve sheep for a ducat. They staid at Venice six weeks, in order to visit all the relics which are there and in Padua. At length setting out, they sailed to Corfu, Candia, Crete, Patmos and Rhodes. He found the inhabitants of Corfu '*Devote à Dieu, gent tres-humaine, et de grant honneur pleine.*' We arrived at Rhodes about ten o'clock in the night on the eighth of July, and passed under the castle of St. Peter, which is an impregnable fortress in the possession of the Knights of Rhodes. The dogs of this castle keep wonderful guard, for they go out at night, and if there should any Christians escape from the rocks, the dogs are sure to find them and to lead them to the castle; and if they find a Turk they kill him if they can, or they bark so loud that it is known within the castle.\* It is wonderful how this castle can be preserved to Christendom, for it seems only six miles from Turkey, which is separated only by a narrow arm of the sea. The hospital of the church of Rhodes is a wonderful place, built like a monastery, and in the great hall there are thirty-nine beds for sick people of all nations and degrees, if they only believe in Jesus Christ; and in the middle is a beautiful chapel where masses are sung every day; and the poor sick people are all served on silver by the seigneurs of Rhodes moult curiousement, and besides this, there are twenty-four chambers surrounding the cloister to lodge the pilgrims, who are received most fraternally, and they are invited most affectionately by the hospitaler who refreshes them, and serves them very joyously.

"On the Friday we had a fair wind in the stern, so that at six o'clock in the evening appeared the holy land. Then you might have seen and heard the devout hearts; then were groans and tears, and chants of devotion. We had to remain at Jaffa thirteen days to wait for the father guardian, and so we tarried in good patience, praising our Redeemer. At length we set forth; on approaching Rama, we were obliged to alight from our asses, and each pilgrim had to carry his burden with great pain, on account of the dreadful heat and of the dust, which was so thick that one could not see the other. The Moors would not suffer us to enter Rama mounted, so we entered it thus on foot, and there we were lodged in the hospital founded by the money of Philip of Burgundy. May God absolve the noble duke! From Jaffa to Rama we were escorted by Mahometans, to protect us from the other Moors who kept throwing stones at us every step we made. Sometimes they have killed pilgrims: such was our peril. On the morning of Sunday,

---

\* F. vi.



the fifth of August, mass was said at four o'clock by one of the monks; and then at the offertory, the father guardian instructed us how we were to behave on our journey towards the people of the country, speaking to us from the altar in Latin, Italian and German. 'Dear and well-beloved brethren in Jesus Christ, take heed to the following advice, that you may not lose the fruits of this holy journey. First, if any of you should have incurred sentence of excommunication, the father guardian of this place, by the power of the holy father, can absolve you therefrom, to whom you must apply, and take consolation in this rejoicing which our Lord has granted to you, in beholding with your eyes the places on which he has trod in accomplishing the salvation of all men by his sacred blood. Secondly, you must believe firmly the articles of faith, for otherwise you will lose the merit and fruit of the pilgrimage. Thirdly, you must have great confidence as to your conscience, that you will have remission; and you must have contrition and a true intention of never again returning to sin. Fourthly, you must consider for what end you are come, and it must be for devotion and contemplation to see the holy places, weeping after Jesus Christ. Fifthly, I say to all, take heed, that you walk honestly and that you commit no evil. You must make no more mention of wine, unless you can carry some from the ship; there is no cellar here where you can buy any.' We set out from Rama on foot as we entered it, and under great heat. On coming to the place where our asses were waiting, each pilgrim claimed his own; so it was four o'clock in the afternoon before we began our march. We travelled till midnight. From Rama to Jerusalem is thirty Italian miles. On the fall of night, we entered the mountains which were very rude and hard for me, because I was obliged to leave my ass. '*Oncques ne fus plus lasse.*' It is the greatest danger for pilgrims when they are left too far in the rear, for the people would desire nothing more than to destroy us one by one. At midnight we stopped to lodge under the shelter of an olive grove near a fountain, which was very refreshing to our thirst. Here we made our collation, and then under these olive trees the knights slept for three hours. An hour before day we mounted our asses, and rode till we saw the town of Arimathea. It was nothing but up and down hill, and it was laughable to look at our train one after the other. On reaching the summit whence we had the first view of Jerusalem, every one kissed the earth and raised his eyes to heaven. So we all entered the city, and the brethren of Mount Sion led all the monks to their convent where we had refecton. The others were lodged in the vast hospital of Saint John, and there sufficient victuals were given them. God knew how weary they all were. The next morning all the pilgrims were summoned to Mount Sion to hear mass and the sermon. Regulars and seculars each by devotion celebrated with great compunction. After the sermon there was a procession to Mount Sion. Then the guardian invited all the pilgrims to dinner, and every one was seated, charitably and honourably served with abundance, and then we all went in very noble guise to the church to return thanks. After vespers, we spent the time in contemplating the holy places." It appears that they proceeded to visit each of the holy places in solemn procession, each carrying a lighted taper, and a sermon was pronounced at each station.

Every year the good duke Philippe, of Burgundy, used to give 1000 ducats in compassion and devotion for the support of the true Christians there serving God. That night after the procession, they remained in the holy sepulchre; the first part of the night was spent in confession, and after midnight the masses were said in order, some on the holy sepulchre, others in it, and others on Mount Calvary. Lastly, the Bishop of Cambray sung high mass with great solemnity, and many received the holy communion, and then each went about according to his devotion, and at eight o'clock in the morning the gates were opened, and the pilgrims returned to the hospital or to their brethren. "On the Assumption of our Lady, we went at midnight to chant at the holy sepulchre, in the crypt of the church at Josaphat; and then returned to high mass on Mount Sion, where she died. 'Tout ce jour se passa en contemplation.' On going to visit the church of St. George near Rama, there were about sixty pilgrims, and the greatest part of them Englishmen. Horrible are the exactions and insolences of the Moors. One pilgrim was moved to strike a Turk, for which he was near forfeiting his hand. 'Pourtant Pélerins soyez tous enclins à tout endurer toutes les injures, griefs on forfaitures au nom de Jesus, car il endura.' The poor Franciscan friars at Jerusalem live most virtuous and holy lives amidst these Sarassins and heretics."

The details on his return may be given in few words. For once he indulges in a poetic tale. "From the top of Mount Sinai," says he, "you behold a region stretching to the Red Sea, and in this plain there is a monastery of holy men, but no one can discern the way to it. You hear the bells toll: and some, it is said, have reached it, but none have ever returned. The monks of St. Catharine have gone in search of it, and have heard the bells, but have never succeeded." During this passage of the deserts of Mount Sinai, they seem to have carried a portable altar, so that mass used to be said even amidst those vast solitudes. "On returning, while at sea, on the night of the 12th of September, trespassed a noble knight, who had received the order of knighthood at Jerusalem. He was doctor in utroque, and named Master Symon, a gracious man and wise. God pardon him. And on the 16th inst. at six o'clock in the morning, trespassed a seigneur of the Church, subdeacon of Angers, named Messire Gilles, a native of Brittany, a man of great virtue, and full of good manners. Jesus be propitious to him and to us all!" At length, after a long and stormy passage from Alexandria, they arrived at Modoust, a city on the coast of Achaia; and now their long desire of hearing mass was gratified. *Entrez en la cite on alla à la messe tres fort desiree a ouyr, car de long temps on ny avoit este.*

Such is the style of a pilgrim's narrative; such were the sufferings and woes he had to endure: and yet a far deeper source of mourning to him was found in the reflections of philosophy, which were excited by what he had seen in journeying to the Holy Land. "O subject worthy of tears and bitter sighs! (exclaims Nicole) that these beautiful countries of the East, once so carefully cultivated by the holy apostles, should be now subverted and lost! Ah! who can think without groans of Asia and Africa, which had such noble churches, which heard a St. Augustin, a Chrysostom, a Cyprian, an Athanasius, a Cyrill, a St. John Da-

mascene, a Gregory Nicene, a Gregory Nazianzen, a Basil of Cæsarea, and so many other great bishops? *Helas Lucifer trebuscha du ciel a mis son siege present en orient. En orient sont les tenebres de peche qui ont tout aveugle et n'y voit on que l'ymaige de mort.*" They have broken unity, they have been rebellious to the see of Peter, to whom Jesus said, "Thou art called a rock; and on this rock will I build my Church:" and therefore, without doubt, those who are disobedient to this mother and mistress of the faith, fall into the guilt of heresy. St. Ambrose in his time said, he wished to follow the Roman Church in all things; so said St. Jerome at the time of the Arian heresy; so said St. Irenæus in the apostolic age; so say all good Christians: for where the body is, there will be the eagles: where is the chief, there will be the members. But the inhabitants of the East have left the ark, and therefore is their glory perished: "*quiconques mangera laiguel hors de l'Eglise Saint Pierre necessairement est prophane.*"

These wise pilgrims of the middle age, who had found in the East Mahometans, Greek schismatics, Syrians, Jacobites, Nestorians, Abbassins, and Eutychians, had meditated on the difficulty which is now so often adduced, founded on the variety of religions, and the comparative smallness of the number who hold the true faith: but the result of their observations only led to reflections which confirmed their faith. This poor brother Nicole, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, pursued the same argument from analogy which has been so well developed by later philosophers; and he shows that the same difficulty presents itself in the natural world, with respect to things noble and base, where the phenomena of external nature would lead to the same reflection on the wide existence of evil, as a fact which did not admit of being denied. Happiness, wisdom, and virtue, are not given to all men. Every kind of excellence is comparatively rare and precious, and we must be prepared, therefore, for finding that such is the case respecting that highest of all excellences, which consists in the splendour and eternal felicity of souls that attain to final beatification and glory. And, after all, he argues that we should be slow either to excuse or to condemn. We cannot presume either upon the innocence or the guilt of erring men. Negligence of inquiry and the evidences of our faith are great; and therefore, the ignorance of many must needs be highly sinful: and the apostle says, that the unknowing shall be unknown. God will never desert those who sincerely turn their hearts to him. And if any seducer, under the habit or name of a Catholic doctor, should preach to any simple creature any error, and the simple ignorant creature should believe it to be Catholic truth, in turning himself to God totally, he will be preserved, and his heart shall not be suffered to incline to folly: for David says that God will guard those who love him. But the understanding of men is created for the embracing of holy and salutary truth, and negligence here is no doubt worthy of damnation; and as every thing tends easily to its natural end, so our natural intellectual virtue is more near to find God than it is to find his contrary. For God is always ready to aid those who seek him with a good and honest heart; and thus we find that Cornelius, though a Pagan, yet living religiously and fearing God, St. Peter was sent to convert him and all his family. "*Il est a croire totalement que jamais Dieu ne lascia ceux qui veullent adherer*



a luy diligentement." And therefore, all error that receives damnation springs from malice. "*L'homme n'est pas moins tenu a Dieu des operations de l'entendement que des operations de sa volonte ou affections.*" And there are laws to regulate his will and affections, and therefore we may be sure that there are laws to fix limits to his understanding, to determine what he should believe, and what he should not believe; and therefore ignorance is damnable, for they ought to believe what they do not: and they ought curiously to inquire what are these laws. Whereas the multitude run with all their strength to sin and death as their end; and it is not strange, therefore, that they should find it. And we know that the justice as well as the mercy of God will be the subject of eternal admiration and joy to the just in heaven. And the first and great cause of all these errors is negligence of inquiry, and the second is aversion to believe what ought to be believed of God, and a hatred for the things that would enlighten and convert the soul; and if they will not heed either holy words or miracles, it is not strange that they remain in error; and another cause is the folly and presumption of men in supposing that their natural understanding is able to comprehend the mysteries of faith, and another cause is the abuse of the Scriptures, and another cause is a sensual life, like that of the Epicureans.\*

These are the sorrowful and profound reflections, suggested to the traveller of the middle ages, by what was seen on the journey to the Holy Land. The reader will now pass on with a still more full conviction, that the pilgrim was indeed a mourner.

But there is another side, from which we must contemplate the mourning of men in ages of faith, which will place us in the presence of scenes of great sublimity, yet not without the charm of a profound tenderness. We are come where I have said we should see the departure of exiles to their country, amidst the mourning of friends who remain behind. The approach must not intimidate us, though we should be at first confronted with a tribe like that which Dante beheld, that came along the hollow vale, in silence weeping. Let us imagine that we behold some reverend stranger, with finger lifted, placed against his lips. This will suffice to warn us, that we may enter as the spot requires—silent and devout.

---

\* F. 40—44.

## CHAPTER VI.

"If I were a maker of books," says Montaigne, "I would compose a register of different deaths, with a commentary: for whoever would teach men how to die, would teach them how to live." It is not merely devotion that is interested in this theme; history itself must acknowledge its importance: for, as the same philosopher observes, "death is the most remarkable action of human life. It is the master-day—the day that judges all the others." The path which we are pursuing, leads us necessarily within view of death, towards which we must turn our eyes. For though the nature of death is changed since the accomplishment of man's redemption, it is still the punishment which God has left to be inflicted upon sin; and whether considered in relation to nature or to grace, it is an event which involves mourning of one sort or other, according to the spirit with which it is received, or the previous preparation which may have been made against it. Men of the modern school, indeed, seem practically to consider this whole subject of death as one, independent of a scientific observation of the progress of the physical malady, beneath the attention of philosophers. Viewing it merely as the dissolution of organs, the decomposition of a worn-out machine, which is incapable any longer of being subservient to animal existence, as an extinction of the powers of life, either through the nervous system constituting death by syncope, or through the circulation in the arteries of a different kind of blood, causing death by asphyxia,—in other words, examining it merely with the eyes of a physician, it is not strange that they should be insensible to the high moral grandeur which so often distinguishes the closing scene of mortal life, or that they should be surprised and offended at the importance which religion ascribes to this last act in the combat of her children. Far differently, it may be remarked, did the monarch of sublimest song estimate the dignity of the human struggle, when, in the concluding scene of the *Iliad*, he represents the two heroes of Greece and Troy at length confronted with each other; when all mortal beholders are dissolved in tears and horror, and celestial powers prepare to join in the conflict; when even the King of gods looks down from his high throne of heaven, to sympathize in the dangers of great unhappy men, to pity their dreadful labours, and to raise at last that awful balance, which is to determine their irrevocable doom.\*

I have said that the nature of death is changed since Christ dried up the fountain of tears by his resurrection: and this is a fact to which the history of the ages of faith bears such remarkable testimony, that if there were no other object in consulting it but merely to examine that testimony, there would be no hazard in affirming that the result would be more than sufficient to compensate for any labour that the inquiry might have occasioned; fully justifying the opinion, that the study of no other period of the history of man can present so rich and solemn a spectacle for the instruction and correction of the human race. When we first set out upon this track, I observed, that men could not with any

justice accuse religion, or the history of the ages of faith, of leading them through dark and gloomy ways, which they might have avoided with other guides: and here I must repeat that remark; for it is not religion, but nature, which obliges all men, sooner or later, to be familiarised with the image of death. Nature takes care that even in youth they should be taught to feel its reality: and oh! if the heart be left to nature, how bitter, how terrible, is that stern lesson! Infinite is the youthful mourning consequent upon the first experience of the changeableness of earthly things, which, to the inexperienced mind, comes so necessarily, so unavoidably, that changeableness of things so closely and invariably interwoven with individual existence. A first announcement of death is a rent which is never forgotten, but which remains afflicting the soul like a night spectre, unless faith should change it into a joyful desire of that day, which will summon us to a securer world, and to a more consoling knowledge.\* “Here,” as a great French writer observes, “there is no need of consulting history. The Muse of sorrow is of every age. Who is ignorant of the funeral chant? Who has not followed to the grave some tender beloved relation, and felt the secret fall of that one pearly drop, which, from the manly eye, more than a flood of tears, bears witness to the affection with which a son can love his mother?”

The ancients, notwithstanding their superstitious language, seemed to have had a passion for dwelling on the thought of death, and of its necessity. Pindar makes it enter into the definition of man: for, speaking of the human race, he says, “Those to whom death is inevitable.” The heroic world, indeed, had its boastful eloquence to reconcile men to this king of terrors. What madness to repine at death! What complaint is this?

“ἀνδρα θνητὸν εἶντα, πάλαι πατρώμενον αἶσθ,  
ἂψ ἐθέλεις θανάτῳ δυσηχέος ἐξαναλῦσαι;”†

And yet this mortality, this fate, this death, how must they have been, to the feelings of nature, replete with images of terror, fearful, revolting, horrible! To these unhappy men, with nothing to assist their frailty, death could not have appeared more amiable than it did to Adam, when he beheld, with looks of dismay, its first victim.—

“But have I now seen death? Is this the way  
I must return to native dust! O sight  
Of terror, foul and ugly to behold,  
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!”

Milton makes it an object of horror to the angel:

“——— Death thou hast seen  
In his first shape on man: but many shapes  
Of death, and many are the ways that lead  
To his grim cave, all dismal.”

Since the Son of God endured it on the cross, such language would not only be unworthy of an angel's tongue, but, without recurring to what is related of Spartan fortitude, it would argue ignorance and pusillanimity in a boy. The author of the *Martyrs* describes the image of death as it appeared after the great fulfilment of primeval prophecy. “One

\* Novalis Schriften, i. 24.

† Il. xvi. 441.



hand of the skeleton, (he says) holds a scythe like a mower; with the other it attempts to hide the only wound that it has ever received, that which Christ inflicted upon it, when he conquered on the top of Golgotha.”\* Cruel enemy! well may it seek to hide that wound which has destroyed its sting irremediably. Unlike the formidable conqueror which it once hoped to be, only the weak and wicked can it affright or injure. We are so constituted, indeed, that this crisis naturally impresses every one with a feeling of awe. The pinched and pallid features, the cold, clammy skin, the heaving, laborious, rattling respiration, and the irresistible force of that disease which no earthly remedies can overcome, speak of something appalling, and suggest the idea of an Almighty Power manifesting displeasure and inflicting punishment. Yet this is not the language which they speak to the Christian observer. He sees these formidable symptoms only as the means or the consequences of good. In the midst of all this apparent confusion, he can see much that he can understand, indicating the counsel and foresight of a wise and good Creator, by whom the progress and elevation of the human species is an object of constant care. Death, though something foreign from the original order of the natural world, has been converted into an agent of mercy: it has become homogeneous with the laws and constitution of a pure and innocent creation: it forms part of that great scheme, of which every discoverable purpose is marked with beneficence as well as wisdom. Death is still endured by the saints; for, as St. Augustin observes, there could be no faith, if immortality of the body were to be the immediate consequence of the sacrament of regeneration; but, by the wondrous grace of our Saviour, the penalty of sin is changed, so as to serve justice. Formerly it was said, “You shall die if you transgress;” but now it is said, “Die rather than transgress.” Thus, by the ineffable mercy of God, the punishment of vice becomes the armour of virtue, and the just gain merit, where the sinner found his doom.† Those penmen whom the Holy Spirit moved, in many a passage of their sacred book, predict or attest this admirable manifestation of our Creator’s love. They speak of death as being henceforth amiable in the eyes of men, sanctified in the estimation of angels, precious in the sight of God. “*Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus.*” Their death is precious: it is their nativity: the entrance to rest, the exit to glory. And who can justly estimate the wondrous change which is here made manifest? Consider what poor consolation for the human heart was supplied in those eloquent treatises by ancient philosophers, which they entitled “*De Contemnenda Morte,*” in which it is so gravely discussed whether death be an evil. And if they are so unsatisfactory when read in health, notwithstanding all the brilliancy and magic of their style, what must they have been if proposed to the dying, with the hope of dissipating the terrors of their departure? But since the Orient from on high hath visited the race of men, there is no longer occasion for engaging in such discussions, or for endeavouring to inspire contempt for that which is no longer an object of terror. During the ages of faith, the Catholic vision, the Catholic idea, that which shed a lustre over the whole course of human life, which consoled and exalted

---

\* Lib. viii.

† De Civit. Dei, lib. xiii. 4.

the mind in every vicissitude, and in every stage of the mortal course, that which determined the direction of all the intellectual faculties, and the whole shape of men's conceptions, that which alone gave a charm to prosperity and a value to existence, that vision had nothing to fear from the prospect of death. Unlike every thing that is subjected to human perception, it ended not there, but led on the soul to that passage, and enabled it to depart full of joy and confidence: while to the human philosopher, without the supernatural light and consolations of faith, every thing dear to his imagination, every thing interwoven with his mental habits, and with the very constitution of his heart, seems to end for ever, when he is clad in clay. "In death," says Durandus, "we pass from one Church to another, from the militant to the triumphant Church."\* "For the just," says another holy writer, "natural death is only a passage from God to God, from one Paradise to another Paradise."† By the passion of our Saviour Christ, death was sanctified, death was become a holy and a blessed thing, a means of imitating Jesus, and of entering upon eternal life. St. Basil says, "The nature of sadness is changed since the cross of Christ. At first the death of the saints was honoured with lamentation and tears, but now, we rejoice at the death of the saints, for we believe it to be the passage to a better life."

Death, in the middle ages, had quite a different character from that in which it appears to Nature's eye. Who has not made this remark on beholding those ancient paintings which represent dying men, like those of Le Sueur exhibiting the death of St. Bruno? What a placid smile on the countenance of the returning exile! With what peaceful reverence and wonder do the brethren stand or kneel round him! See that humble monk, who stands at a distance with clasped hands, on whose face one may read unutterable thoughts of love, so calmly regarding him as his spirit passes, while another still holds up the crucifix to his fading eye, though, by his attitude, turning round to those behind him, he seems to ask for assent to his own opinion, that he is already gone. "The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them." Here are no bitter lamentations, or wringing of hands, or tearing of the hair,

"Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail  
Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,  
Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair."

St. Ambrose wrote a Treatise "On the Advantages of Death," in which he shows the happiness of dying, because death has nothing terrible in itself, and is a deliverance from snares and sin. "With faith to enlighten you," say the philosophers of the middle age, "why fear death, which to you should appear only as a higher revelation of life? How many things do men voluntarily undertake, which are more painful and distressing than the act of death? Compare it with the setting out on a long and toilsome journey, alone, without friends, leaving all who are dear and familiar to you, going among strangers, where there will be no one to welcome you; and all this merely, perhaps, to satisfy

\* Durandi Rationale, lib. iv. cap. 6.

† L. P. Judde, Œuvres Spirituelles, tom. ii. 2.

vanity, and with the hope of gain! What sleepless nights, what fatiguing days, what profane and disgusting associates by the way, what interminable troubles and interruptions, perhaps amidst wars and civil tumults and persecutions of the Church. Compare death to this. You are at home, in the bosom of relations and friends, with those you love around you; no cares to trouble you, no solicitude; you are going a journey of necessity, a journey sanctified by the Saviour, and by the passage of all God's holy saints; a journey you must accomplish if you would be with that which you seek, if you would follow where all that is amiable and good is fled: whither all your hopes are gone before: where, perhaps, you will have father, mother, sisters, brethren, and saints, to welcome you: where you will find the friends of your childhood and youth, and where all your troubles will be at an end. "*Hæc peregrinatio mediocris vobis videri potest?*" Why linger, why turn back, why shrink or fear to depart from earth's shadows, which change and pass so quickly? How different the length of the two ways! How tedious, and difficult, and painful the one! how short, and easy, and calm the other! You fall asleep,—and when you awake, perhaps you find yourself in your country. You closed your eyes upon a flickering taper, and you may open them to behold Heaven's light which will for ever shine. The last sounds you heard were the prayers of some priest, feeble and worn down with his labours in this valley of tears, perhaps the mourning of nature struggling with faith, the longings of desire, the sighs of the dove, and now you hear joyful hallelujahs and the music of exulting angels. "Let us reflect from time to time," says St. Cyprian, "that we have renounced the world, and that we live here below as guests and strangers. What man, obliged to dwell in a foreign land, would not strain every nerve to return to his native country? What traveller journeying homeward, does not pray to heaven for a favourable wind, that he may the sooner embrace his dear parents? Our country is Heaven. We have for fathers first, the patriarchs. Why do we not hasten, why do we not run to behold our country and to salute our parents? A vast number of friends are waiting for us, a crowd of relations, of brethren and children, sure of their own salvation and only anxious for ours, desire nothing but to behold us united to them for ever. What joy for us to meet them again and to embrace them! What a pleasure to die without fear! What profound and perpetual felicity to live in eternity!" "All my hope is in death. I die of regret that I cannot die," says St. Theresa in her celebrated glose after communion, and the effusion of beatific light seen but in a vision, made the poet of the ages of faith exclaim,

"Whoso laments that we must doff this garb  
Of frail mortality, thenceforth to live  
Immortally above; he hath not seen  
The sweet refreshing of that heavenly shower."\*

But methinks I hear some one reply, to die young is surely a calamity to be deplored even by the most spiritual? Indeed, what new doctrine is this to be delivered by men professing wisdom? Bacchus was for deciding against Æschylus merely because in one verse he repre-

---

\* Dante's Parad. xiv.



sented death as the greatest of evils;\* and the fable of Silenus, alluded to by Cicero, conveys the deepest conviction of the ancient world, who, when he was taken by Midas, is said to have given for his ransom this lesson, "that it was the best thing for man not to be born, and that the next best was to die as soon as possible;"† the latter part of which sentence must remind every one of what is read in the sacred scriptures, that Enoch pleased God, and appeared no more, because God took him away.‡ "It was because he pleased God," says St. Cyprian, "that he was transported far from the contagion of the world."

"In the ages of faith, he who was to be *δυμοζώτατος ἄλλων*," as Thetis says of her son,|| "would not have been regarded as unhappy." In fable, indeed, a mighty king is made to exclaim, "haa mort villaine! comment as tu este si hardie dassailir un tel homme comme estoit mon nepueu qui de bonte passoit tout le monde." Yet not Orcus, as Euripides says, but Heaven seemed to have greater glory when the youthful died.§ As far as relates to the thought of an untimely death, faith and reason clear, had undeceived men. Whether their flesh parted shrivelled from them, or whether they died when the cheek was first clothed in down, or before the coral and the pap were left, the difference was to eternity compared, "a briefer space, than is the twinkling of an eye to the heaven's slowest orb." But death in years of boyish innocence, even to nature's eye, was not a hideous or a fearful spectacle. What tender and even lovely scenes were those in which occurred the death of a St. Stanislas, or a St. Louis Gonzaga. "I die without reluctance, I die full of joy, though the gifts of youth are mine to make life grateful to me." There was here, enough to make men exclaim, "Death! death! O amiable lovely death!"

The heroic spirit of the scholastic romantic ages would not disdain to urge the motive which Achilles adduces to reconcile the youthful son of Priam to meet death.

ἼΑλλὰ φίλος, θάνα καὶ σὺ τίη ὀλοφύρεαι οὕτως;  
Κάτθανε καὶ Πάτροκλος, ὅπερ σέο πολλὸν ἀμείναι.  
Οὐχ ὀδᾶς, οἷος καλῶ καλὸς τε μέγας τε;  
Πατρος δ' εἰμ' ἀγαθός, θεὰ δέ με γείνατο μήτηρ.  
ἼΑλλ' ἐπὶ τοι καὶ ἐμοὶ θάνατος καὶ Μοῖρα κραταίη.\*\*

Why do you repine at death? Are not these dead in the flower of youth and beauty, cut off from beloved friends and brothers, from sweet and holy studies, from that golden world which is made joyful by piety and innocence, and yet did they not die with resignation and even with delight? Die then like them, and exult to follow such bright examples. For the generality of men to die young, was known to be, on every account, an excellent lot. "Priam," as Callimachus remarks, "wept much oftener than Troilus;" and in relation to spiritual good, Henry Suso observes, "that for the most part, with age sins are increased, and that you will find far more who become worse than who become better. Our blessed Saviour chose not to protract his life beyond the flower, and it was an Antipope who prolonged his usurpation beyond the years of Peter."†† Men never leave the world with such becoming grace as

\* Aristoph. Ranæ, 1393. † Tuscul. i. 45.

§ Alcestis.

\*\* Il. xxi. 106.

‡ Gen. v. 24. || Il. i. 505.

†† Called by some Benedict XIII.

when young; as when they seem to make death proud with pure and princely beauty. To die young seems like a genuine heroic act. "Love is sweetest in death: for one who loves, death is a mystery of sweet mysteries; it is a bridal night," to use the expression of Novalis.\* If it be the most beautiful art and gift, as the Greek poet says,

εὐκλεῶς λιπεῖν βίον, †

then assuredly we should die young. In the death of youth there is nothing hideous or revolting, but only a most sweet solemn form of loveliness. In allusion to her death, Beatrice speaks thus to Dante:—

— "never didst thou spy  
In art or nature, ought so passing sweet  
As were the limbs that in their beauteous frame,  
Enclos'd me, and are scatter'd now in dust."

The death of youth, the striking down of these fair flowers, was often made the occasion of eternal good to men, by converting their hearts to a love of God. Adverting to this, Beatrice continued to admonish Dante:

"If sweetest thing thus failed thee with my death,  
What, afterwards, of mortal, should thy wish  
Have tempted? When thou first hadst felt the dart  
Of perishable things, in my departing  
For better realms, thy wing thou should'st have prun'd  
To follow me; and never stoop'd again  
To bide a second blow."‡

In the middle ages, men were conversant with what Frederick Schlegel terms "the beautiful side of death." They marked that full and perfect consciousness, that peculiar clearness and almost foresight which so frequently attend the soul in her last moments previous to departure, to which Shakspeare alludes in these lines:

"O, but they say, the tongues of dying men  
Enforce attention, like deep harmony."

They marked that courage with which she prepares to enter upon a new sphere, upon regions that never saw man that could after measure back his course,|| that higher clearness in hope and faith, nay, even that expression of countenance which indicates a change to bliss, when they beheld with astonishment, a sweet melancholy smile steal over the face, like that which comes upon a sleeping child.§ The emblematical figure which is placed at the end of the sentence which this great Catholic philosopher was prevented from finishing by death, is quite in accordance with this view, and furnishes a striking contrast to the designs of that detested triumph which employed the pencil of the Basle Painter. It represents a beautiful figure with extended wings, and holding with outstretched arms, the rings and links of a broken chain. It flies upwards through the serene air, as if it had just escaped, and the globe of this earth is seen below, half enveloped in clouds, while an eye at the summit of the picture indicates the seat of God, towards which it is ascending. St. Charles Borromeo ordered a painter to substitute the golden key of Paradise for the skeleton and scythe by which an artist had rep-

\* Schriften, ii. 312.

|| Dant. Purg. i.

† Eurip. Heraclid. 534.

§ Philosophie der Sprache, 112.

‡ Parad. xxxi.

resented death. In the chronicles of the middle ages, we read of many who made a swan-like end, fading in music, who died, as the poet says, "like a dolphin, whom each pang imbues

" With a new color as it gasps away,  
The last still loveliest, 'till 'tis gone."

So Shakspeare says of one who had passed from this world, "nothing in his life became him like the leaving it: he died as one that had been studied in his death."

"Speaking accurately and strictly," says Frederick Schlegel, "according to this Christian view of life, there is no such thing as death, but only a change of life and its passing form. There is no death in nature, that is to say, death is not essential and original, but it has been introduced into the creation subsequently and by accident. For men, the immortality of the soul, and the idea of this immortality form not so much an article of faith and of the highest hope, as a real phenomenon of nature, an unquestionable matter of fact, which is attested by all history."\* "To die," says Novalis, "is a genuine philosophic act."† He alludes probably to that saying of the Pythagoreans, "that in three modes man could render himself better, by converse with the gods, by doing good to others, and by dying, which was the total separation of the soul from the body."‡ But whatever may be thought of this speculation, we may appropriate to ourselves the sentence, and say, in reference to death in the middle ages, that "to die was a genuine religious act;" an act converted by the spirit of resignation and of love for Christ from a natural necessity, to be the voluntary offering of a devout and obedient heart. It must, however, be carefully remarked, that this "beautiful side of death" is connected essentially with the Catholic form of life. It is the manners and customs of the impious city which make sickness and death horrible. To the quiet retirement and contemplation of nature, to the charity and spirit of obedience to God in which the Catholic was accustomed to pass his days, the silence of the sick room was no contrast; he had learned to live alone without visits, without cares, without political debates, and without flattery; but from a perpetual tumult of pleasures or business, with some constant external excitement, the transition to it was undoubtedly something as dismal to the imagination as the idea of death itself to the natural eye. And this leads me to notice the objection which some may advance, who, though willing to admit that the act of death may have been stript of terror, cannot conceive how the passage to it through a long sickness could ever have been any thing but a fearful and unmingled calamity. Unquestionably it belongs not to the principles of the true philosophy to imitate that stoical indifference which affected to deny that the sufferings of the body were an evil, or to adopt, as St. Augustin says, "the proud error of those who attribute to the strength of the human will that constancy which is derived from the Divine assistance." "There are but few," says that holy doctor, "who are not punished in this life but only after it. The evils of diseases in the body are so numerous, that they cannot be all described even in the books of the physicians. Who does

\* Philosophie der Sprache, 269.

† Anonym. de Vita Pythagoræ.

‡ Schriften ii. 142.



not shudder at the bare recital of them? Life itself begins with weeping, for Zoroaster alone is said to have laughed when he was born, which monstrous act portended no good to this inventor of magical arts, who found them of no avail even to preserve the vain happiness of the present life from the power of his enemies, since he was conquered by Ninus, king of the Assyrians. ‘Grave jugum super filios Adam a die exitus de ventre matris eorum, usque in diem sepulturæ in matrem omnium.’ And yet such is the mercy of God towards the vessels of mercy, that even from this yoke of the present life, the grace of our Saviour Christ, in a great measure delivers them,”\* though not wholly, lest religion should only be loved for the sake of temporal advantages. What, let us ask, was sickness to members of the city of God during these supernatural ages? Like every other condition to which mortal life was subject, it had experienced the mysterious and gladdening influence of the glorious light of faith. Sickness now disproved the definition of a happy man, as given by Metrodorus; for like death, it was become amiable, sanctified, and precious; it belonged to the condition not of wretched, but of blessed mourners; it was a holy condition full of instruction, full of peace; it was solitude, meditation, repose; it was the life of blessed eremites and of men perfect.

Hear how a writer of the middle ages speaks to the sick. “We are commanded to weep with those who weep, and Jesus himself wept. Disobedience is inhumanity. I will weep therefore lest I should be disobedient and inhuman, and not an imitator of my Jesus. You are oppressed with sickness, my sweet son; you are perhaps about to go the way of all flesh. But whither? to life. By what way? You cannot err: the way is Christ. You cannot be deceived: Christ is truth. You cannot but live: Christ is life. But, beloved, confession and penance are necessary that you may be in perfect charity. The love of your neighbour worketh no evil. What shall I say of the love of God? These are the two wings with which you must fly to heaven. Love God and God will love you. Love God and you will love whatever he loves, whatever he sends you. Do you suffer from a cough, from inflammation, from weakness of stomach, from any of the innumerable diseases to which our frame is subject? These are the gifts of God. These are his chastisements for your good; condemn them not, but revere and love Him who, as a Father, corrects you not in anger but in mercy. O with what a joyful heart ought you to hail the Divine visitation, the spiritual remedy, the antidote to the sting of death! Lift up your heart to God and say, ‘Tu es spes mea, Deus meus: diffido de meis meritis, sed confido de miserationibus tuis: et plus confido de tuis miserationibus, quam diffidam de malis actibus meis. In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.’”† St. Chrysostom writes as follows to Olympias and says, “Do not suppose that you lead an idle, useless life for your salvation, when sickness confines you at home attached to your bed. What you support is above what they suffer who are delivered to the executioners. ‘In vestra patientia possidebitis animas vestras.’ He does not say,” adds St. Augustine, “your villas, your honours, your luxuries, your

---

\* De Civitate Dei, lib. xxi. 14. xxii. 22.

† De Visitatione Infirmorum, lib. incerti auctoris.

comforts, your health, but your souls ; and if the soul can suffer, as is proved by experience, so many things for the sake of that by which it may perish, what ought it not to suffer that it may never perish ? What ought it not to suffer, in order, by the tranquil endurance of pain and death, by a patient passion, to obtain the inestimable good of a happy immortality ?”\* “*Jam ægritudinem laudare, unam rem maxime detestabilem, quorum est tandem philosophorum,*” says Cicero.† In fact, some of the ancient philosophers were able to discern the advantages which resulted from it, to the intellectual nature, and at least, in speculation to forestall the judgment of those happier sages, who directed their discipline to temper and moderate those excessive energies of the body which tended, by their full development, to weaken and impair the higher faculties. “The sickness of a certain friend,” says Pliny, “gave me occasion lately to remark, that we are the best men when we are infirm. For when does avarice or lust solicit a sick man ? He has no thought of pleasure ; he does not seek honour, he neglects riches ; then he remembers that there are Gods and that he is a man ; he envies no one ; he admires no one ; he despises no one ; and he neither attends to malignant conversation nor is he nourished by it.”‡ These were a heathen’s reflections, but the Christian had far greater and holier considerations to cheer his hours of sickness. “Let a wise man be brave in enduring pain ; that is sufficient for the discharge of duty. That he should be joyful I do not require,” continues Cicero, “for unquestionably it is a sad thing, rough, bitter, hostile to nature, difficult to endure.”§ Yet faith enabled the Christian to find a source of satisfaction even in the pains of sickness, by reminding him that these supplied him with an opportunity of being more conformable to his divine Saviour. In health there were many distractions calculated to make him lose all similitude with that great prototype ; but on the bed of suffering he lay stretched like the blessed Jesus on the cross, and in the offering up of these pains, he found a sweetness and a consolation that surpassed all the exhilaration and joy of the most vigorous health, “as much,” to use the words of St. Augustin, “as the wisdom of Job in sickness exceeded that of Adam in the strength and freshness of youth wandering in the groves.” This was a phenomenon which suggested many reflections to men of philosophic observation, though, in their speculations, they too often overlooked the real secret cause of this mystery of the moral nature. The testimony to the fact which is borne by Novalis, is assuredly remarkable, when he says, “the moment in which a man begins to love sickness or pain is perhaps that in which the sweetest pleasure is in his arms, and the highest positive delight runs through him. May not sickness be a medium of higher synthesis ? The more fearful the pain, the higher the secret pleasure. Every sickness is, perhaps, a necessary beginning of the inward union of the two existences, a necessary beginning of love. Hence men can become enthusiastic for sickness and pain, and, above all, for death, as a closer union of the two existences. In general, do not the best things begin with sickness ? Half of sickness is evil, the whole sickness is pleasure ?”§

\* De Patientia.  
 † Tuscul. lib. ii.

‡ Tuscul. iv. 25.  
 § Schriften ii. 287.

† Epist. lib. viii. 26.

This passage, by a modern philosopher, would furnish an interesting commentary on what is related of many of the saints whose sentiments in sickness and death, are viewed with such contempt or incredulity by others of his religion who wanted the genius and penetration which he possessed. The Spaniards have a saying, "Where evil is, good is;" and these were occasions to demonstrate its truth. To the state of sickness in the ages of faith, there were certain duties and manners belonging, the observance of which gave rise to many lovely and astonishing scenes, which are described with beautiful simplicity in the ancient chronicles. The characteristics of the sick, like those of the dying, were changed, and wholly different from what they had been by nature. Like nectar now, men slowly sipped the most nauseous medicines, when they were reminded of the vinegar and gall. The Nurse, in the *Hippolytus*, says, "It is better to be the sick person than the attendant," the latter had so much to endure from the waywardness and impatience of the sufferer.\* What a different portrait was seen in an Abbot Stephen, a St. Philip Neri, a St. Clare, a St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi! What a different one was drawn by the poet who had the experience of Christian ages!

"He faded, and so calm and meek,  
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,  
So tearless, yet so tender-kind,  
And grieved for those he left behind."

How changed, too, were those who attended on the sick! It was in ages of faith that arose those institutes of mercy in which holy women, like ministering angels, devoted their lives to serve the sick. Such are those sisters of charity, and those gray sisters, who continue to perform so many miracles of charity in our unbelieving age. Men visited the sick now, not only through humanity and friendship, but as an act of devotion. "I was sick, and ye visited me," said our Lord, meaning, as he proceeded, to explain that whosoever would visit the least of his disciples in sickness would be recompensed hereafter as having visited him. Hence the sickness of the lowest attendant would be enough to reverse the plans of a whole family, and to interrupt the progress of a man in the highest authority. St. Gregory of Tours, describes his distress, on one occasion, as he was travelling, and one of his younger attendants fell sick:—"This event involved us in great loss, for the sickness of this boy put a stop to our proceeding further on the journey. I prayed earnestly to God that he might be healed; for he was always most patient of labour, and most pious."† This help of intercession, so consoling to the sick, and often through Heaven's mercy so instrumental to their recovery, was never wanting in these ages of love. When Bayard was sick in Grenoble, the writer of his life relates, that every one was praying for his recovery. Not only his uncle, the bishop, but also all the noble citizens and merchants, with all the holy religious people, monks and nuns, interceded for him, day and night. He was soon restored to health. "Et nest possible," adds this devout writer, "quen tant de peuple ny eust quelque bonne personne que Dieu ne voulust ouyr."‡

\* Eurip. 187.

† S. Greg. Turon. *Miracul. lib. ii. c. 66.*

‡ *La tres Joyeuse Hystoire, &c., chap. lv.*



Among the advantages of sickness, even in the romantic ages of chivalry, was considered its exemption from the danger of a disturbed and unsanctified death. To the eye of religion, it would have been a happier end for Bayard to have died of the distemper which attacked him in the Episcopal Palace of his holy uncle at Grenoble, than to have perished as he wished, with the Duke of Nemours, in the slaughter on Easter Sunday, at Ravenna. Aristotle, indeed, will not allow that courage can be evinced in sickness:\* so that with that idea the young knight might hold it in abhorrence: but, yet, experience in any thing, as the Stagyrte admits, may give rise to courage; and, therefore, Socrates used to call courage knowledge; and, for the same reason, they who were acquainted with sickness and death might have had occasion to evince courage.

With regard to physical sufferings, the deep and loving familiarity in which men lived with nature enabled them to perceive that sickness and the approach of death are not what people in health imagine them to be. "Nature, then," as Paschal says, "gives passions and desires conformable to the present state. It is the fear which we give ourselves, and not nature, which troubles us; because it joins to the state in which we are, the passions of the state in which we are not."† But let us now draw nearer to these mourners, and behold them stretched on the bed of sickness, that we may have proof that during the ages of faith their's was truly a blessed sorrow. In the monastic histories, we have many scenes of this kind described in minute detail. The author of that affecting book, which relates the deaths of certain monks of La Trappe, writes as if from the other world, for he had been sick almost to death, so as to have received the last sacraments of the Church; and he had made what he supposed his last discourse to the brethren, when it pleased God to delay his departure. He relates, that many of the monks of La Trappe had originally gone to that house of austere penitence, in a state of the greatest weakness and suffering of body, and had been admitted into it, from a conviction that they would give as much edification, by patience and resignation in their sickness, as others by the labours and exercises which belonged to those of robust health.‡ The father abbot of La Trappe asked brother Euthyme, whether he did not feel the solitude of the infirmary very wearisome, and whether he was not tired with having nothing to do? To which he replied, "My days seem very short. I pass them in prayer, in reading, and in working with my hands. Un chretien peut il s'ennuier?"§ Yet these solitary men contemplated a state of real solitude, that which inevitably awaits the worldly race, with the utmost horror. Dom Isidore II., in his last sickness, said, on one occasion, to his brethren, "How will a soul that has neglected its Judge, and which has chosen to serve the creature and not its Creator, be able to accommodate itself to that fearful solitude in which it will find itself at the hour of death? What nakedness! What dereliction! This soul, which reposed in the creature as its centre and its happiness, beholds itself all of a sudden abandoned and deprived of every support. It is not

\* Ethic. lib. iii. cap. 6.

† Pensees 1, part. ix.

‡ Relations de la Mort de Quelques Religieux de l'Abbaye de la Trappe, tom. ii. 147.

§ Id. tom. i. 102.

sustained by God who has rejected it: neither is it by creatures, for they are without power to give it any succour. What a solitude! What a void!"\* The Abbot de Rancé says of Dom Paul Ferrand, when sick in the infirmary, "I used to visit him every morning at four o'clock. I used to find him on his knees saying his Breviary."† Dom Basile, in his last illness, though during severe cold, used to rise and say mass a little after four o'clock. So also Dom Isidore continued to hear mass every morning; and only two days before his death, he was able to hear it in the church without being supported.‡

In the middle ages, the sick had the consolation of being able to assist at the holy rites of the church till the last hour of their life. Hospitals were so constructed, that the patients who were in bed could each see the altar in the chapel; and those who were infirm in private houses were visited by the clergy, who were charged to administer this consolation to them. When sick persons were unable to leave their chamber, leave used to be given to say mass, even on the most solemn festivals, in a private oratory.¶ It was the custom also that the Psalms should be chaunted to every dying person, as may be collected from Morinus, the sacramentary of St. Eloy, and from other liturgical monuments: "The ministers of the holy church of God, with the utmost reverence, ought to sing before the sick every day, the office of vespers, matins, and lauds, with the antiphons, responses, lessons and prayers, pertaining to them." St. Gregory of Tours relates, that when St. Gall, Bishop of Arvernum, was at the point of death; just as the morning broke, he asked what was singing in the church? They said that they were singing the Benediction; and he, commencing with the fiftieth Psalm and the Benediction, proceeded to sing the whole office of matins. But we must proceed now to the consummation of earthly woe, to the last suffering of the blessed mourners.

## CHAPTER VII.

"WHEN man," said Simonides, "is in the sweet and precious flower of youth, having a light mind, he thinks of many unaccomplishable things: for he never supposes that he will either grow old or die; nor, when in health, has he any thought of sickness. Such is their foolish mind, nor do they know how short to mortals is the time of youth and life."

Θνητῶν δ' ὄφρα τις ἄνθρωπος ἔχῃ πολυήρατον ἡβης,  
Κοῦφον ἔχων θυμὸν πόλλ' ἀτέλεστα νοεῖ.  
οὔτε γὰρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχει γηρασέμεν, οὐδ' ἐθανεῖσθαι,

\* Relations de la Mort de Quelques Religieux de l'Abbaye de la Trappe, tom. ii. 127.

† Id. i. 32.

‡ Id. ii. 138.

¶ Benedict. XIV. de Sacrificio Missæ, ii. 24.

οὐδ' ὕλης ὅτ' ἂν ἦ, φροντίδ' ἔχει καμάτου.  
 νηπίοις ταύτῃ κείται νόος· οὐδ' ἴσασι  
 ὡς χρόνος ἔσθ' ἥβης καὶ βιώτου ὀλίγος  
 Ἑλληταις.\*

Were we to judge from the spirit and tone of the literature of the middle ages, we might suppose that these beautiful lines of the ancient poet had ceased to be a just representation of the human mind with regard to the remembrance and contemplation of death. The Abbé Gouget observes, that the greatest number of the old poets of France loved to recall the image of death, and that they used even to introduce it into those works which seemed the least serious. The *danse macabre* was a common termination of their pieces.† The ancients did not dare in common so much as to pronounce the word which denoted it; so that, with the Latins, to die was implied in that remarkable expression, “to rejoin the majority.”‡ Not so in Christian ages, when even by poets and orators, every particular instance of death is made an occasion for reminding men that they will themselves experience it, as in the words of Talbot, on the death of Bedford—

“A braver soldier never couched lance,  
 A gentler heart did never sway a court;  
 But kings and mightiest potentates must die,  
 For that’s the end of human misery.”||

And yet nothing extravagant, useless, or unnatural, was sanctioned by religion with regard to the importance which it attached to the remembrance of death. It only said, to use the words of Lombez—“Live with the same circumspection and the same humility as if you expected death every hour, and think no more of death than if you were never to die.”§ It is related, however, of the Archduke Leopold, of Austria, son of the Emperor Ferdinand II., that he used to repeat every night on going to bed the prayers for the dying in recommendation of the soul, as if his sleep were to be followed by death: but of the spirit of the ages of faith in all these exercises connected with the meditation of death, we may say, in the words of Cicero, “*Quæ non hoc affert, ut semper mereamur, sed ut numquam.*”\*\* Who doubts, who denies that, in a certain sense, death is a solemn and awful subject for the contemplation of man? From high descends the virtue, by whose aid alone he is able to meet it without terror. “In the first place,” as Montaigne says, “we all come apprentices, not masters to death.” We find ourselves presented with a multitude of thoughts, which are to the greatest part of men, wholly new. “Know this well, O Socrates,” says the aged Cephalus in Plato, “that when any one thinks himself near death, a fear and reflection come to him concerning things about which he had never thought before.”†† Of this fact poets have sometimes availed themselves, and I know not if this fearful picture be not sometimes more calculated than the gravest discourse to prepare men for contemplating their end. Witness the account given by the Monk of Melrose respecting the last hours of Michael Scott—

\* Stobæi Florileg. tom. iii. 288.

† Plautus Trinummus, ii. 2. 14.

\*\* Tuscul. iii. 16.

VOL. II.—33

† Bibliotheque Française, tom. x. 185.

|| Hen. VI. 11. p. 2.

§ Chap. ii.

†† De Repub. lib. i.

w 2



"When Michael lay on his dying bed,  
 His conscience was awakened:  
 He bethought him of his sinful deed,  
 And he gave me a sign to come with speed.  
 I was in Spain when the morning rose,  
 But I stood by his bed ere evening close;  
 The words may not again be said  
 That he spoke to me on death-bed laid.  
 I swore to bury his mighty book,  
 That never mortal might therein look."

This account so wrought upon the imagination of the listening knight,  
 that when the magician's grave was opened, and he in terror took

"From the cold hand the mighty book,  
 With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound,  
 He thought, as he took it, the dead man frown'd."

Fable and romance derive, after all, their greatest charm from their concordance with truth. Leaving them, however, for more austere studies, how fearful is it to hear a holy man, Adam de Persenna, of the Cistercian Order, speaking of the day of judgment, and saying, "Nescimus utrum dies illa nobis futura sit lucis æternæ diluculum, an, quod Deus avertat, crepusculum æternæ noctis." The dying man knows also that he will not have long to wait without being informed of this momentous doom. "Hades, 'Αιδης, is so called," says Socrates, "not, as is generally supposed, from 'not seeing,' but much rather from 'seeing and knowing all things clearly.'"\* Speaking of a man dead, the Greek poet says, "He knows all about it now: ἄδου δ' ἐν δόμοις παιδύεται."† Theologians say, "that the secret judgment of God takes place in the chamber where a man dies."‡ "The place of the particular judgment, which is passed the first instant after the soul is parted from the body, is commonly thought to be that wherein a man dieth. So that God being immense and every where, raiseth in that very place his invisible seat, before which the poor soul, scarce yet out of the body, suddenly appeareth."§ Then each one confesses all, and to judgment passing, speaks and hears his fate; thence is conducted to the dwelling which suits his condition. How terrible is the thought of such a speedy and short trial! We can estimate its fears by the impressions which we feel on merely reading of the fate of the Platæans, who obtained a similar hearing from the Lacedæmonians, who took their city, though upon them it was only a temporal punishment which could be inflicted. Each one of us may be reminded of what awaits himself when he hears the question that was proposed to these unhappy citizens as they came forth at the summons of their conquerors, one by one, and each was simply asked, "Whether he had done any good service to the Lacedæmonians, or to their allies, during that present war?" They begged permission to be indulged in a few words, and not to be confined to giving a direct answer; they wished μακρότερον εἰπεῖν, and their chief speaker was for declaiming at length upon their ancient deeds of patriotism in resisting the Medes. But they were not allowed to avail themselves of

\* Plato Cratylus.

† Eurip. Ion. 965.

‡ Drexelius Tribunal Christi, lib. i. cap. 6.

§ Meditations for the Use of the English College at Lisbon, iv.

any past services, but still the one short and terrible question was proposed to each as he came out; and as he was constrained to confess the truth, that he had done nothing, he was put to death, and thus they all perished.\*

Strange and terrible visions and events are recorded to have taken place in various ages of the church in attestation of this speedy doom which follows death, which are not the less solemn, if explained on the ground chosen by St. Augustin, who ascribes them to the operation of angels acting by divine command. Among the letters of St. Boniface there is one relating a most awful vision, which was described to him by a man who had been miraculously restored to life, who revealed to him what his soul had seen in the other world. Guilty spirits, too, were known to come forth from their sepulchre, and to start up from their biers to announce to the earth the punishments of divine justice, and to say to men, "Pray not for me! I am judged, I am condemned!" Who has not heard of that vision of Alberico, from which Dante is supposed to have taken the idea of his immortal poem? But while we are on such themes, gentle reader, as Socrates says to Theætetus, "Look around and examine μή τις τῶν ἀμύητων ἐπακούη, lest there should be present any of those persons who think that there is nothing existing but what they can grasp in their hands, and to whom πᾶν τὸ ὄρατον is inconceivable and inadmissible. Truly, replies the disciple, you speak of dry, hard, repulsive men. O boy, they are not exactly the children of the Muses, (adds Socrates,) Εἰσὶ γάρ, ὦ παῖ, μάλ' εὖ ἄμυνσαι." Trusting, however, that they are far from us at present, let us hear what was the substance of this history. Alberico, then, we read, born of noble parents at a castle near Alvito, in the diocese of Sora, in the year 1101, was seized, on completing his ninth year, with a violent fit of illness, which deprived him of his senses for several days. During this trance, he had a vision in which he seemed to be conducted by two angels through purgatory and hell, and then to be taken up into Paradise, to behold the glory of the blessed. As soon as he came to himself again, he was permitted to make profession of a religious life in the monastery of Monte Casino. As the account he gave of his vision was strangely altered in the reports that went abroad of it, Girardo, the abbot, employed one of the monks to take down a relation of it from the mouth of Alberico himself. Senioretto, who was chosen abbot in 1127, not contented with this narrative, ordered Alberico to revise and correct it, which he accordingly did, with the assistance of Pietro Diacono, his associate in the monastery, and a few years younger than himself, and whose testimony to his extreme and perpetual self-mortification, and to a certain abstractedness of demeanour, which showed him to converse with other thoughts than those of this life, is still on record. It is conjectured that Alberico lived to a good old age.

There was a similar narrative that used to be told in Melrose Abbey, respecting St. Drithelm, whose relics reposed there. This extraordinary man, the noble Thane of Cunningham, in Northumbria, subsequently a monk and confessor, after a severe illness, rose, as it were, from the dead, and reported his vision of the other world to Hemgils, a

---

\* Thucyd. lib. iii. 68.

priest, from whom Bede derived his information, as also to king Alfred himself. This vision is also related by Alcuin. These are strange relations, but there are others more fearful still, which seem to confirm the belief of Origen, that God sometimes permits the spirits or souls of the dead to become visible to men;\* notwithstanding the doubt of St. Augustin, who adduces but negative arguments to disprove it, as where he concludes from the fact of his mother having never appeared to him, that the dead can never really return to the living;† though, in another place, in reply to Dulcitus, he reasons upon the ground of the possibility of their appearing.‡

In the year 1150, it is related that, on the vigil of St. Cecilia, a very old monk, an hundred years of age, at Marchiennes, in Flanders, fell asleep while sacred lessons were reading, and saw, in a dream, a monk, all clad in armour, shining like red hot iron in a furnace. The old man asked him who he was?—and hearing that he had lived among the monks of that convent, he stretched out his hand toward the spectre, but it charged him to beware how he touched it, adding, that he had yet to endure this fiery armour for ten years more, to expiate the having injured the reputation of another.|| Those who are inclined to hear such narrations will observe, that the doubts of St. Augustin do not amount to denying that such a vision may have appeared, for he only infers that it was effected by the instrumentality of angels; however, Peter, the venerable abbot of Cluny, relates an event somewhat similar, which, from being attested by him, is more calculated to make a deep impression upon all. “There was a monk at Cluny,” saith he, “named Bernard Savinellus. One night, as he was returning to the dormitory, after singing nocturns and lauds in the church with the brethren, he met Stephen, vulgarly called Blancus, Abbot of St. Giles, who had departed from life a few days before. At first, not knowing him, he was passing on, till the other spoke, and asked him, whither he was hastening? Bernard, astonished and angry that a monk should speak, contrary to the rules, in the nocturnal hours, and in a place where it was not permitted, made signs to him to hold his peace; but, as the dead abbot replied, and urged him to speak, the other, raising his head, asked, in amaze, who he might be? To whom it was answered, I am Stephen, called abbot of St. Giles, who have formerly committed many faults in the abbey, for which I now suffer pains; and I beseech you to implore the Lord Abbot, and other brethren, to pray for me, that, by the ineffable mercy of God, I may be delivered.” Bernard replied, that he would do so; but added, that he thought no one would believe his report; to which the dead man answered, “In order, then, that no one my doubt, you may assure them that, within eight days, you will depart from life:” he spoke and vanished. The monk, returning to the church, spent the remainder of that night in prayer and meditation. When it was day he related his vision to St. Hugo, who was then the abbot. As is natural, some believed his account, and others thought it was some delusion. The next day the monk fell sick, and continued growing

---

\* In Cels. lib. ii.

† Lib. de Octo Dulcitii Quæstionibus.

‡ Hist. des Saints de la Province de Lille et Douay, p. 377.

† De cura pro Mortuis.



worse, and constantly affirming the truth of what he had related, till his death, which occurred within the time specified.”\* But we have wandered too far amidst this darksome wilderness, where every man would rather ask than pretend to point out the way. Let us regain our road.

To all men, death comes in part as the fulfilment of the original sentence upon sin. “Mors,” says St. Anselm, “is derived a morsu pomi vetiti.” It is so far essentially connected with mourning, either from a consideration of sin or from a remembrance of what was paid to cancel it; or, in fine, from the natural impulse of our poor humanity. Our first mother had the consolation of hearing an angel, and of learning that glorious decree of Heaven’s mercy, which ordained that her seed was to overcome the serpent; but still, nature felt the terrors of the irreversible sentence, and we read,

“—— So much of death her thoughts  
Had entertain’d, as dyed her cheeks with pale.”

Our all-perfect and almighty Saviour, Christ Jesus, wept over the grave of dead Lazarus: and when he heard of the death of St. John the Baptist, we read, “Secessit inde in navicula, in locum desertum seorsum.”† We find St. Paul saying that God had mercy on Epaphroditus, raising him from sickness, lest, by the death of so dear a friend, he should have sadness upon sadness.‡ We behold holy Mary too, the queen of heaven and mistress of the world, overwhelmed with sorrow beneath the cross, when

“She saw her sweet and only child  
In desolation calm and mild,  
In life’s expiring throes.”

“Where is the man,” exclaims the holy Church, “who would not weep if he beheld the mother of Christ in such suffering?” Far be it from the humble followers of a crucified Saviour to profess a scorn for death, which he condescended to endure. It is disarmed, it is vanquished; yet its aspect still bepeaks its origin, and the eye naturally turns from it in mourning. But if death be thus solemn to the just, to the chosen vessels, to the highly-favoured of Heaven, what shall we say respecting it, as affecting those who die subject to the wrath of God? The ancients were able to discern that there were two forms of death, widely different from each other, determined by the previous lives and character of those who suffered it. Plato speaks of these in the *Phædrus*, the *Phædo*, the *Gorgias*, and in the tenth book of the *Republic*. “The way to Hades,” we read in the *Phædo*, “is not simple and only one; for, in that case, there would be no want of a guide, since it would be impossible to go astray: but it seems that there are many cross-ways and circuits—and those who have committed sacrileges or murders, or other great crimes, fall into Tartarus, whence they never get out. ὅθεν οὐ ποτε ἐκβαλίνουσιν.|| And Socrates would remind the wicked, that, when they die, ἐκείνους μὲν ὁ τῶν κακῶν καθάρως τύπος, will not receive them, but they will have to keep company for ever with those things that resemble them, κακοὶ κακῶς συνόντες.§

To the natural terrors of a guilty conscience there was added, in ages

\* S. Petri ven. de Miraculis, lib. i. cap. 10.

† Ad Philippens. ii.

|| Plato, *Phædo*, 114.

‡ Matt. xiv. 13.

§ Plato, *Theætetus*.

of faith, the conviction, from the knowledge of express revelation, that punishments were prepared for every lost soul of man, in the future and eternal state : and what tongue can describe that perspective of the horrors of hell, at which incredulity may for a moment laugh, but before which Voltaire himself, when dying, turned pale beyond the ghastliness of death ! “This I hold, this I think certain,” says St. Jerome, “that he who led an evil life cannot have a good end.” “O what a difference in death,” exclaims the venerable Bede, describing the last moments of a reprobate. “Stephen, in dying, beheld the heavens opened, and this unhappy man saw, as awaiting himself, hell opened !”<sup>\*</sup> What think you of that night in which Chrysorius died, horribly crying out, “truce till morning, truce till morning !” as St. Gregory relates in his dialogue ?† “Now say thou, who goest to spy death, if any else be terrible as this ? ‘Mors peccatorum pessima.’” Would you hearken for a moment to their complaints ?

“Thoughts, my tormentors, arm’d with deadly stings,  
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts.  
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise  
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb  
Or medicinal liquor can assuage ;  
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,  
And sense of Heaven’s desertion.”

“Mors peccatorum pessima.” The great men of this world die full of voiceless gloom, and impenitent, die as they have lived, like the Sassanin described by Tasso :

“Argantes died, yet no complaint he made,  
But as he furious liv’d he careless dies :  
Bold, proud, disdainful, fierce, and void of fear,  
His motions last, last looks, last speeches were,†  
‘Superbi formidabili, feroci  
Gli ultimi moti fur, l’ultime voci.’”

Or their’s does often resemble that terrible death which closes the poem of the Orlando Furioso,

“The indignant spirit fled, blaspheming loud,  
Ere while on earth so haughty and so proud.”

“Mors peccatorum pessima,” mark again,

“Approach the chamber, look upon his bed,  
His is the passing of no peaceful ghost ;  
Which, as the lark arises to the sky,  
’Mid morning’s sweetest breeze and softest dew,  
Is wing’d to heaven by good men’s sighs and tears !”

Hearken to that holy monk who is assisting the dying Marmion on the bloody field :

“O look, my son, upon yon sign  
Of the Redeemer’s grace divine :  
O think on faith and bliss !  
By many a death-bed I have been,  
And many a sinner’s parting seen,  
But never aught like this !”

\* Lib. v. Hist. Anglor. cap. 15.

† Lib. iv. cap. 38.

‡ Lib. xix. 26.

"Mors peccatorum pessima;" I will look no more. It is every where the same, and yet this horror is but the prelude to that greater dismay when the trumpet of the judgment angel shall sound within their sepulchre crying, "Surgite, mortui!" already, however, are they made acquainted with their doom:

"They have slept the evil sleep,  
That from the future tore the curtain off."

On the other hand, it is true that the judgments of God are sometimes seen in the profound obscurity in which the future is involved to the eyes of the dying and impenitent sinner, who is permitted sometimes to console himself with the epicurean's affirmation, "that death is the last line of things."\* Pliny remarked the error of the common opinion, "that universally the testaments of men are a mirror of their manners, since Domitius Tullus appeared far better in his death than in his life."† But it is in the modern society that these examples of an ungrounded tranquillity are chiefly found, to which no parallel is furnished by the history of the middle ages. The Tartarus of the ancients, the cross and sinister ways that Socrates speaks of, the testimony of original revelation, and primeval tradition respecting the future inexorable judges, "at whose bar," as Cicero says, "no one can have a Crassus, or a Marc Antony, or a Demosthenes, for his advocate, but every one must plead for himself," the terrible announcement of eternal fire by the voice of Him who cannot deceive, seem all alike to them, like idle tales to which they give no credit; they deny that there can be material fires, or spirits and bodies subject to them. Satan says to them, "thou shalt not burn," as he did to Adam, "thou shalt not die:" he prevents them from remarking, that there may be a doom to penal fire joining wicked souls that first had been with fleshly bodies united in ways equally wondrous and equally true. The death of a distinguished member of the Huguenot sect in France, was thus described lately by his friend. "His last words were respecting the things he had always loved: the joys and sorrows of his friends, literature, civilization, liberty, and the future prospects of France." What would Socrates have thought of one who confined his discourse to such topics at his death? When these examples were first becoming known to Christian society, they excited a horror mixed with astonishment, which is forcibly expressed by Madame de Sevigné, on relating the death of Charles II.: "*Il me semble que la mort du roi d'Angleterre devient plus philosophe et Angloise que Chrétienne et Catholique. Adieu roi me fait quasi un nœud à la gorge.*"‡ But I must hasten on from the dark, and deformed, and sorrowful side of death, well pleased to leave so cruel sea behind, to illustrate from the history of the ages of faith, what we have alluded to as its beautiful side, and to view the fulfilment of this debt of nature in reference to the mourners who were blessed. Matter this not unbecoming even an heroic theme, as Homer will attest; for the question which Telemachus addresses to Nestor, after expressing the greatest reverence for his age and wisdom, was simply this "how died Agamemnon?"

πῶς ἔθαν' Ἀτρεΐδης εὐρυκλεῖαν Ἀγαμέμνον;"||

---

\* Horace, Epist. i. 10. † Epist. lib. viii. 18. ‡ Lett. Roy. 724. || Od. iii. 248.



and with reason, since it is by their death men can be known. "In fine hominis, denudatio operum illius." But who has a tongue to celebrate worthily the admirable and glorious triumph of the meek children of grace over death and the grave? Who is able to penetrate the depth of their mysterious consolations, or to conceive the ineffable sweetness and constancy of their hope? It is in reference to them that one may well be anxious to inquire from history; for who does not feel impelled to ask, in the words of Echecrates to Phædo, "What was it that these men said before death, and how did they die? for it would be a sweet thing to hear this."\* Let us look upon them as we find them lying on their death-bed, where, as in the instance of St. Dunstan, they saw so many strange visions of heavenly joys, showed unto them for their great comfort. Let us leave the history of the middle ages to speak for itself, and remain but mutes or audience to this act, while it displays before us, in the language of these ancient times, the form of death, which is pronounced to be precious in the sight of God.

In the ancient monasteries, there are necrologies, in which the deaths of the brethren and benefactors are minutely described; but besides these the monastic histories abound with similar examples. "Now that we have described the holy deeds of St. Richarius," says a venerable chronicle, "what remains but to relate the death of the just? But that should not be called death which constitutes the birth-day of a saint; for when dead to the world, then he is truly born to Christ in heaven. It is miserable to love the place of death any longer, and after experiencing its dangers, to seem unwilling to enter the port. You should rather rejoice with him, that being saved from the wreck of the world, he should now live secure and crowned with Christ, eternally safe and happy. Therefore we shall not call it the death, but the transit of this Father, who on this account is truly happy, because, despising the world he had this transit always before his eyes. The day before his departure, when he was to receive the object of his long desire, and to be joined forever with God, he called Sygobard his fellow soldier, saying to him, 'I know, my son, I know that my end is not far off, and that I shall soon behold my King whom I have long desired to see. Do you then prepare a vessel in which my body may be placed, not with superfluous study, but for necessary use, and my son, prepare also yourself with all diligence, that when that day, so near to me, and which is not far from you, shall arrive, it may find you prepared. I go the way of all the world, only may the Saviour of the world be gracious unto me, and defend me now from the enemy, who formerly redeemed me from the enemy; that whom I had as the consoler of my present life, may be a dispenser to me of eternal life.'" The disciple hearing him thus speak, wept much, but obeyed his orders, and when he had prepared the sarcophagus, the holy father had scarcely breath; yet still he continued to pray and to give thanks, while he fortified himself for his passage, by receiving the body and blood of Christ: amid thanksgiving and words of prayer his spirit departed.† In the same chronicle occurs the following scene: "After four years of sickness, Gervin still continuing to perform all his service to God, being inflamed by a devotion which

---

\* Plato, Phædo.

† Chronic. Centulensis sive Richarii, lib. i. cap. xxi. apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. iv.

nothing could interrupt, was apprized of his approaching deliverance in this manner. In the beginning of the year of our Lord MLXXIV., on the day when the church celebrates the presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the temple, he said mass in the crypt of the church of our monastery, and being more afflicted than usual, it was with difficulty that he was able to complete the mysteries. However, by the grace of God, having accomplished them strictly, being fatigued by such exertion, the brethren supporting him on the right and left, led him back to his room, and then he said to them, "My sweet sons, do you know I have received from St. Mary leave to depart this day?" And they asking him whither he meant to go? "whither," said he, "but to that place to which I have always desired to go, and for which I have always besought God;" but the brethren replying, "that he could still live long, in order that sacrifice to the omnipotent God might be offered by his hands," he said, "never again will brother Gervin sing mass." In fact, he never rose again from his bed, and in the beginning of Lent, on the fourth feria, he called together the elder brethren and such as were priests, and spoke to them as follows: "As the blessed Germain said to his brother bishops, so I say to you, my sons; I commend to you, dearly beloved, my passage hence, for I perceive that the hour is at hand, when the salvation which I have long sought for from the Lord, will come to me; and this was always the intention of my prayers, that the merciful God would order my death to take place during the holy days which have lately commenced; and now since I trust that he is about to grant my petitions, I wish to confess before you, in the sight of God, all the evils which I have committed, and on account of which, I fear for my soul; believing that this confession, through the tender mercy of the Lord and your intercession, will cleanse me." Having said this, while the brethren wept round him, he recited before them some grievous sins, which they all knew he had never committed; the brethren being astonished, having known the innocence of his life, said to him, "But good father, you accuse yourself of things of which it is manifest you were never guilty. Certainly you never committed adultery nor homicide." "Spare me, brethren, spare me, I beseech you, and do not load my soul; for if any have perished under my care, truly in the judgment of God, I shall have to render an account of their souls; and as for adultery, hear what Christ says: 'qui viderit mulierem ad concupiscendum eam, jam mœchatus est eam in corde suo.' With these and other words he commended the care of his exit to God and to their prayers. Still he caused one of the brethren to sing the whole psalter to him every day, because he was himself unable. The brethren seeing that he approached his end, according to the mandate of St. James, anointed him with blessed oil, and asked him where he wished to be buried; but he would not point out any place, leaving it to their own choice, but being continually urged to do so, he said, "I will tell you what I wish you would do, but I know you will not fulfil it; fasten a rope to my foot, drag me and any throw me on the dung-heap, because I do not think that I deserve another sepulchre. He besought them, however, to carry him in his last hour into the church of St. Richarius, that there he might render his soul to God. Accordingly, on the third feria of the second week of Lent, after matins, the brethren found him in the agony, which he per-

ceiving, with his hand he made signs to them to carry him into the church, and the brethren carried him there, and having spread sackcloth, they placed him before the altar of St. John the Baptist. Then having placed the crucifix before him, the congregation began the litanies, and when they came to Sancta Maria, 'ora pro eo,' he repeated the words in death, and when they chaunted 'S. Richari, ora pro eo,' he let fall tears, and stretched out his hands, and repeated the words, and then he lapsed into quietness; and the litanies being finished the brethren began the commendation of the faithful; and when they came to 'suscipiat te Christus,' his spirit departed."\* Ingulphus describes the last days of Turketul, Abbot of Crowland:—"Worn down by age and labour, he expected the day of his release, devoting himself with greater assiduity to vigils and prayer, and celebrating the holy mysteries, allowing himself leisure for holy meditations, and relieving all the poor, giving food to all that sought alms, and to all the needy, and exercising every other act of charity, despising the present life, and desiring the future, neglecting nothing of the regular observances, and yet always speaking of himself as an unprofitable servant, and from his heart imploring the mercy of Christ. Once every day he used to visit the schools of the children and sons of the nobles who were educating for the priesthood or the cloister, and to examine the reading and labour of each, bringing with him some figs, or raisins, or nuts, or apples, or other such little presents, to reward those who were doing well, that all might be excited, not only by words or stripes, but by prayers and rewards: he assisted divers old monks that were sick to death, and would never leave them by day or night, but would sing the regular office before them, and perform, like the cleverest youth, all proper service with his own hands. At length, in the year 975, after the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, he was seized with a fever; and on the fourth day, he assembled all the monks, forty-seven in number, with four lay-brothers, and exposed to them the state of the whole house. Then, having communicated in the sacred mysteries of Christ, he embraced the crucifix within his arms, and kissed it, with sighs and tears, and spoke such devout words to each of the wounds of Christ, that the brethren who stood near, wept abundantly; and from the hearts of many of them, as long as they lived afterwards, the memory of his devotion never departed. On the day before his death, he made a short sermon to his brethren, and warned them to be careful against accidents of fire. He departed on the day of the translation of S. Benedict, at the completion of the regular office, and passed from the cares of his abbatial government to the bosom of Abraham."†

Serlon, Bishop of Séez died in the year 1123. Some days before his death, perceiving his end to be near, after celebrating mass in his cathedral, he called the canons and officers of his church, and said to them, "I feel very weak, through age and sickness, and I see that my hour is not far distant. I commend you to God, who chose me to be your pastor, and I conjure you to pray for me. Let my tomb be prepared, for I have but a very short time to remain with you." After this discourse, he went with his clergy before the altar of the Blessed Virgin; and there,

\* Chronic. Centulensis sive Richarii, lib. iv. cap. xxxv. -vi. † Hist. Ingulphi, p. 51.



with his crosier, he pointed out the spot where he wished to be interred. Then, after saying some prayers, he sprinkled it with holy water. After this the workmen opened the pavement, and dug the grave, and the masons built the vault; he then descended into it, and laid himself down, as if he had been dead. The following day, which was Friday, he returned to the church, and wished to say mass. He had already put on his amice, but he found himself so weak, that he was afraid he might not be able to finish the celebration, and so he caused his chaplain to say mass; after which, he assembled the canons, and said to them, "Come, all of you to me after dinner, for I wish to distribute, according to rule, the treasures which I have amassed from the revenues of the church, that no one may be able to accuse me before God. *Sicut nudus in hunc mundum intravi, sic me decet nudum egredi.*" At three o'clock, the bishop sat down at table to dine, but he could eat nothing. During the whole repast, he spoke of God with great unction and grace. As the assistants were about to rise from table, he expired.\* "When one visits the sick," says the Abbot de Rancé, "one has generally to console them; but this man, Dom Paul Ferrand, consoled those who came to see him die."† We have already visited the infirmary of La Trappe to watch the sick; let us now return to it to behold death. Dom Paul Ferrand assisted at tierce, high mass, and vespers, till the very eve of his departure. At the beginning of Lent, he had predicted that God would remove him hence on the same day as that on which he was pleased to die for sinners. On Maunday Thursday he rose at half-past three in the morning, and between four and five went to the church and received our Lord. On his return to the infirmary, he said that he wanted nothing more than a bed of ashes and straw: he was most anxious to hear the death-hammer, which is always struck at the moment of a soul's departure. In the evening, he went into the church with a firm step, and received extreme unction. When the monk, who had charge of the infirmary, asked him, on his return, whether the exertion had not made him very weak? He replied, '*Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo. Moriatur anima mea morte justorum, et fiant novissima mea horum similia.*' On the morning of Good Friday he expired."‡ When brother Joseph was dying, and already stretched upon the cross of ashes and straw, all the prayers being finished, as he seemed to desire something, he was asked if he wanted any thing, and he replied that he felt a great thirst. The monk brought him some diet drink; but this perfect disciple of Jesus Christ, who had followed his Master with such fidelity in life, desired still to follow him on Calvary. He refused to taste it, and said, "Jesus Christ felt thirst upon the cross, and would not drink." These divine words were the last he spoke; and shortly after, full of joy and consolation, he resigned his soul into the arms of Jesus Christ.|| When Dom Isidore lay at the point of death, having been silent for a long time, at length, about nine o'clock in the evening, as if he had just awoken from a profound sleep, he began to chant the praise of God with

\* *Recherches Historiques sur la Ville et le Diocèse de Séz, par De Maurey D'Orville*, 119.

† *Relations de la Mort de Quelques Religieux de l'Abbaye de la Trappe*, tom. i. 28.

‡ *Id.* tom. i.

|| *Id.* tom. i. 152.

a loud voice, and with such force that he was heard distinctly in all the adjoining chambers. He began with the litany of Jesus, and with that of the saints, adding the collects, and many other prayers, the Benedictus, the Magnificat, the Psalm *Laudate Dominum de Cœlis*, with the hymn and prayers in honour of the Blessed Virgin; and he departed in the very act of singing to resume the chant in the choir of angels.”\* When Dom Alberic Godinot was stretched on the cross of ashes at the point of death, an ancient friend, who had come to see him, was weeping by his side; but the holy man rebuked him, saying, “You ought to be ashamed to weep for me. Rejoice, my brother, and be not afflicted. Behold the time of my joy and of my happiness.”† “Dom Dorothee died without appearing to suffer any agony, after he had had a full presentiment of the hour of his death. During the last hours of life, Dom Isidore never ceased invoking the saints, and saying, ‘*Benedicite spiritus et animæ justorum Domino, benedicite sancti et humiles corde Domino.*’ In the evening, he desired himself to be placed on the bed of ashes; and all the community, on coming out from the collation, came to him, and recited the prayers for those who are in their agony; but he was in an ecstasy of joy: he continued to speak of God and of his mercies till eleven o’clock, when he made signs to the monk who watched over him, to raise him up so as to sit upright; but the monk not understanding him, he repeated the sign; and still the monk, not knowing what to do, the other monks came round, and began to consult together what it was that he wished to say. Dom Isidore, fearing that their zeal to serve him would lead some of them to speak, and so break their rule,‡ raised his hand on high, and said, in a low tone of voice, full of sweetness and reverence, ‘Silence, my fathers, silence!’ A few moments after he expired, in peace and perfect possession of his faculties.”|| “When the father abbot of La Trappe had administered extreme unction to brother Euthyme, the holy sufferer said, aloud, ‘That he hoped, in the goodness of God, and that he trusted in his mercy.’ ‘I asked him,’ says the Father Abbot, ‘if he expected all from his goodness, without depending in the least upon his works; and if he sincerely renounced his past life.’ ‘I renounce it,’ replied he, with a firm tone; ‘and I hope all from the goodness of God; it is so great, that he has compassion and mercy upon those who are unworthy as I am.’ This poor brother died in such peace, that it was like a lamp which goes out without any one perceiving it. We did not know whether he was dead, or whether he yet breathed; but he had departed.”§ “Brother Peter Durant was three months sick; and during the whole time, he never failed a single day, not even on that of his death, to say his office on his knees. He went to the church at four o’clock in the morning to receive the last sacraments. Two minutes before his death, he was regarding the crucifix with affectionate eyes, and saying, ‘The just crucified for the unjust!’ The brethren who recited the prayers around him did not perceive when he was dead, so gentle and happy was his passage.”\*\* “When brother Zeno was dying, after the community had

\* Relations de la Mort de Quelques Religieux de l’Abbaye de la Trappe, i. 383.

† Id. ii. 33.

‡ It was after Complin.

|| Id. ii. 147.

§ Id. ii. 147.

\*\* Id. ii. 269.

recited the prayers of the agony, he saluted all the brethren with inclinations of the head, and with an air of sweetness, and cheerfulness, and gratitude; and, above all, with an expression of peace which filled them with consolation. A quarter of an hour before his death, one asked him what were his dispositions at the moment: and he replied in two words, 'Patience and mercy.' Some instants after, without any convulsion or effort, he rendered up his soul into the hands of Jesus Christ."\*

But let us repair to other places for illustrations of death in ages of faith.

Frodoard, in his History of the Church of Rheims, speaks as follows of the abbot, St. Theodulph. "He lived to the age of ninety, enjoying the finest old age, distinguished by his long white hair, amiable and smiling in his countenance, temperate in his manners, full of charity, liberal in alms, magnanimous in contempt for the world; and never did any pain or fever, or fatigue of body, or accident, or pain of the soul, prevent him from his prayers, and from performing the works of the Lord, as long as his blessed soul animated his body. At length, one day as he entered the Church to matins, being seized with slight symptoms of fever, he felt moved to recommend his soul to God, and continued in devout prayer till sunrise, when he returned joyfully to his cell; and when his hour arrived, making his peace with all the brethren, with eyes and hands raised to heaven, he rendered up his blessed soul to his Creator."† When the humble and blessed friar James, who was a simple, unlearned lay brother, of the order of St. Francis, came to die, having begged pardon of all the religious who were assembled, he took a wooden cross, which he had at his bed's head, and kissed it, and put it to his eyes, and then, with great tenderness, although he was simple and unlearned, said in Latin, "*Dulce lignum, dulces clavos, dulcia ferens pondera, quæ sola fuisti digna sustinere Regem cælorum et Dominum.*" All who were present were astonished—for none of the religious had ever heard the humble man say such like words in Latin. Having uttered these words, he gave up his spirit to our Lord.‡ St. Isidore, of Seville, feeling the approach of death, went into the church, assembled the people, made them a fine exhortation, then offered prayers to God, and rendered up his soul in presence of them all.

There are some affecting details recorded of the sickness and death of the great Abbot Suger. In his last illness he came down, supported on both sides, into the chapter-room, where the monks were assembled, and then he made a discourse on the judgments of God, the most moving they had ever heard. He then fell at their feet, and prayed them, with tears, to pardon the many faults of his administration and conduct during the thirty years that he had governed the house. They could only reply by their tears. Then he told them that he came there to judge himself, and that he concluded himself to have been unworthy of the office of abbot, and that he deposed himself, and remitted into their hands his crosier and all authority, conjuring them to proceed at once to a new election, that he might have the happiness to die a simple monk. He

\* Relations de la Mort de Quelques Religieux de l'Abbaye de la Trappe, ii. 303.

† Liv. i. chap. 25.

‡ Ribadeneira, Lives of the Saints, Novem. 11.



wished St. Bernard to come to assist him, but the saint was unable; however, he wrote to him a most affecting letter. "Brother Bernard wishes, to his very dear and very intimate friend, Suger, by the grace of God, abbot of St. Denis, the glory which springs from a good conscience, and the grace which is a gift of God. Fear not, man of God, to put off the earthly man, of which the weight sinks you down to the earth, and drags you almost to the abyss, that man of sin which torments, oppresses, persecutes you! What have you in common with these vestiges of an unhappy mortality, you who are about to be clothed with glory?" Such was the commencement of his letter. Towards Christmas the weakness became so great, that Suger believed his last moments were arrived, and he felt happy at the prospect of his deliverance; but thinking that his death would interrupt the joy that ought to accompany these holy solemnities, he prayed to God to prolong his life till after the festival. His prayer was heard, and after three weeks he expired.\*

In the year 1148, St. Malachy, from Ireland, was seized with illness while staying in the Abbey of Clairvaux. Having celebrated the festival of All Saints with great joy, he assembled the monks on the third of November, and told them that God had heard him, and that he was to die in their arms. He departed after midnight.

In the year 1370, when Pope Urban was seized with his mortal illness, soon after his return to Avignon, he ordered the doors of his palace to be set open, that all the world might be more impressed by witnessing his death. "It must have been a very affecting and edifying sight, (says a writer of that time) to behold a Pope extended like a poor man, on a sorry bed, clothed in the habit of St. Benedict, which he always wore, his crucifix in his hands, and showing the signs of the greatest piety, penance, and resignation." Pope Leo IX. died in the church of St. Peter at Rome, while sitting near the tomb which he had prepared for himself. St. Chrysostom died on his forced journey to the shores of the Euxine, in the church of St. Basilique, into which the soldiers had allowed him to enter.

These are affecting and memorable records. But how deeply interesting to be able to assist at the last moments of the great and blessed St. Francis of Assissi! We read that at his death he said he wished to appear before his Judge naked and stripped of every thing. Then causing the passion out of St. John to be read, he began to recite the Psalm, "*Voce meâ ad Dominum clamavi, voce meâ ad Dominum deprecatus sum. Effundo in conspectu ejus orationem meam, et tribulationem meam ante ipsum pronuntio. Educ de custodia animam meam ad confitendum nomini tuo: me expectant justi, donec retribuas mihi.*" With these words he departed.

Arnulph, a nobleman of Flanders, converted miraculously by St. Bernard to a religious life at Clairvaux, coming to die, after receiving the sacraments, exclaimed suddenly, "*Vera sunt omnia, Domine Jesu, vera sunt quæ dixisti.*" Some thought that he was raving; but he went on to explain, saying that the promise of Christ was fulfilled, which affirmed that there was none who had left house or brethren, or sister,

---

\* Hist. de Suger, liv. vi.

or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for him and for his Gospel, who did not receive in this world an hundred-fold, and in the future, life everlasting.\*—St. Anthony found the dead body of St. Paul the Hermit kneeling on the ground, the head raised, and the hands spread towards heaven. At first he thought that he was alive, and was praying.—Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, describes a very solemn scene connected with the death of a poor novice in that abbey. “I came to him, (says the holy abbot) as usual after vespers with the brethren, and we found him in great suffering. He then received from my hands the celestial food of our Lord’s body; after which, he lost his speech. In silence he remained all that night and the whole of the following day, till the vesper hour, when suddenly he broke forth aloud, to our great astonishment, with the words, ‘Domine miserere, chare Domine miserere, Domine misericordiam;’ and so he continued repeating these words, and invoking St. Martin. With this long and uninterrupted supplication for mercy, in the presence of us who knelt round him praying, and on the day of the Holy Innocents, did this innocent soul depart from the miseries of this life, and as is allowable to believe, attain to the mercy which he so devoutly invoked.”†

It was in the year 1157, that Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, went the way of all flesh. His departure was in this manner. On the vigil of the Nativity of our Lord, entering the chapter as usual, in good health, he heard the announcement of the blessed festival, and after the manner of Cluny, he adored with the most humble prostration. After the lesson and the absolution of the dead, he began a sublime discourse on the preaching of the nativity and the announcement by the prophets; when suddenly, in the midst of his discourse, his eyes overflowed with a torrent of tears, and falling down, he was borne out of the chapter by the hands of his children, who were almost distracted through grief: he remained very ill the whole of that day and the following night, till the first dawn of the morning of the Nativity; and at the very hour in which Christ is believed to have come into the world, did he leave the world, and proceed to celebrate the solemnity of our Lord’s birth with angelic spirits.‡

Paschasius Radbert relates that St. Adalhard, Abbot of Corby, in the ninth century, said mass to the last, and preached twice on the day before his death. He expired a little after midnight on the Circumcision; and his last words were full of joy. With hands and eyes raised to heaven, he said aloud the *Nunc Dimittis*: then, after adding that he only desired the divine will might be done, he continued with a joyful voice, though full of the gravity of faith, “I shall go hence and repair to my God. Joyfully I shall repair to him; joyfully I shall die, and joyfully I shall pass the mighty gulf of this life, since I am about to arrive at everlasting joys, which have been for a long time promised to me.”||

How quickly were these mourners comforted by their Divine Master! Behold St. Francis Xavier in the island of Sancian, on the confines of

\* Drexelius, *Tribunal Christi*, lib. i. cap. 10.

† Pet. Ven. Abb. Clun. ix. Epist. lib. i. 4, *Bibliothec. Cluniacens.*

‡ Abbat. Clun. *Chronologia.*

|| *Vita S. Adalhardi*, Mabillon *Acta S. Ord. Benedic. Sæc. iv. p. 1.*

China, dying in a wretched open cabin on a desert mountain, without any worldly assistance—but yet overwhelmed with all kinds of spiritual benediction! Claudius Poujol, a monk of Einsiedelin, of most holy life, was not prevented by his mortal illness from going to communion in the church on the last morning of his life!\*

The death of Hugue of St. Victor can only be related as we find it in Durandus; for the circumstances attending it are such as to defy comment. When this great doctor lay on his death-bed, he asked for the body of our Lord; but as his stomach could retain no food, the brethren, distracted between the impulse of humanity and reverence for our Lord, offered him an unconsecrated host, which he rejected, asking God to pardon them for what they had done; then they, in great astonishment, brought him the body of our Lord, which he was unable to receive. Upon which, raising his hands to heaven, he prayed aloud, saying, “*Ascendat filius ad patrem, et spiritus ad eum qui fecit illum;*” with which words his spirit departed, and the body of our Lord was no more seen.†

Hitherto, it is true, we have only beheld the last moments of men who may be considered as real philosophers—men who had followed the path of perfection in a religious life. But, during the early and middle ages, we might discover innumerable instances of the same form of death, within the walls of the palace, the castle, or the cottage. Every where alike, the priest and the dying man would speak together respecting the future world; and as Chateaubriand remarks, the sublime scene which antiquity presented but once in the death of the chief of its philosophers, was repeated every day in the humble cabin of the lowest Christian who expired. St. Servulus was a beggar and a paralytic from his childhood, who used to be carried daily into the portico of the church of St. Clement at Rome, where he was supported by the alms of the faithful, and where he himself used to relieve other poor. He used to get pilgrims and poor people to read the Holy Scriptures to him, and to repeat the Psalms. His death occurred in the year 590. As he was dying, while they chanted round him, he suddenly ceased to sing, and said, “*Hark! do you not hear that sweet melody in the sky?*” And with these words he expired.

St. Vincent de Paul was summoned to St. Germain-en-Laye, to assist Louis XIII. in his last moments. The first words of the holy priest, as he approached the dying king, were, “*Sire, Timenti Dominum benè erit in extremis.*” The king was so familiar with this sacred language, that he immediately replied in finishing the verse, “*Et in die defunctionis suæ benedicetur!*” Suger describes the edifying conduct of the King, Louis-le-Gros, when he was seized with the sickness which he thought would prove fatal. Suger was then constantly present with him by night and by day. The religious prince had, through all his life, cherished the desire to die in the Abbey of St. Denis, where he had been educated; and he wished to be transported there on this occasion, but he found himself too weak to bear the motion. Assembling all the bishops and abbots of his suite round his bed, he made his confession, and received absolution from them all. Then he distributed to churches and hospitals all his gold, silver, and precious furniture, giving even his clothes

\* Tschudi Einsiedlische Chronik. 218.

† Durandus Rationale, lib. iv. 41.



and the hangings of his bed, in order to imitate, as he said, "the nakedness and poverty of his Saviour, who died for him." Thus reduced to poverty, he prepared himself to receive the last sacraments. During all his sufferings, which were very great, he never testified the least impatience or trouble: gentle and affable to every one, he consoled all who approached him. Causing himself to be carried into the chapel, there on his knees, though obliged to be supported, and with every expression of the utmost humility, he adored our Lord. Then he made a discourse to his son, exhorting him to prove himself a good prince, to be always the protector of the church, the father of the poor, and never to commit wrong. Then, after making his confession of faith with as much precision as if he had been a most able theologian, he received the communion, and almost immediately afterwards found himself better, so as to be able to return to his chamber, where, however, he was again placed on his bed—on that poor bed which was now stripped of all the ornaments, which had so lately adorned it. At this moment Suger, struck with such an alteration, could not refrain from tears; but the king said, "Dear friend, do not weep to see me in this state, but rather rejoice that God has given me grace to prepare myself for receiving death by this voluntary act of renunciation." In a few days he was sufficiently recovered to ride on horseback to St. Denis, to return thanks to God for his recovery, where he remained for a long time prostrate in prayer. Suger remained in his abbey spiritually refreshed by such an example of piety. When, at last, this great king came to die, he wished to be transported to St. Denis, but again he was too weak to bear movement. He caused some tapestry to be spread on the ground, and ashes in form of a cross to be strewn over it, and himself to be placed upon it; and upon this bed of penitence he expired in the act of making the sign of the cross.

In like manner, Henry III. of England, in the year 1272, after confessing his sins at first secretly, and afterwards in public before all the prelates and monks, who were present at his last moments, caused himself to be placed upon a bed of ashes, on which he expired.

Christine de Pisan gives a minute account of the last hours of the great and wise King of France, Charles V. "In order to give some recreation and comfort to his servants, whom he saw greatly afflicted on account of his sickness, he caused himself every day to be raised up, dressed, and placed at table; and, however weak, he would still address to them some words of consolation and of good advice, without any complaint or sign of grief, but only invoking the name of God, of our Lady, and of the Saints. Two days before his death, after a most grievous night, he rose in this manner, and spoke to all his attendants with a very joyous countenance, saying, 'Rejoice, my good loyal friends and servants, for within a short hour I shall be out of your hands.' They supposed from the joy of his countenance, that he alluded to his recovery; but he said this to intimate his approaching departure from this world of sorrow. On the day of his death, which was the Sunday, he desired to behold the crown of thorns of our Saviour and his own coronation crown, which were both brought to him by the Bishop of Paris and by the Abbot of St. Denis. That of the thorns he received with great devotion, tears, and reverence, placing it before his face; and that

of his coronation was put under his feet. Then he began this prayer to the holy crown. ‘O precious crown, diadem of our salvation! how sweet and delicious is the joy which thou givest by the mystery which is comprised in thee, if, indeed, He be propitious to me, with whose blood thou wert bedewed, as my spirit rejoices in the visitation of his worthy presence :’ and then a long prayer he said very devoutly : after which, directing his words to the coronation crown, he said, ‘O crown of France, how art thou precious and preciouslly vile ! precious, considering the mystery of justice contained in thee ; but vile, and viler than all things, if we regard the labour, anguish, torment of heart, body, and conscience, yea, peril as to the soul, which thou bringest to those who bear thee ! And he that should well consider these things, would rather leave thee lying in the mire than lift thee up from it to place thee on his head.’ Then the king uttered many remarkable words, full of great faith, devotion, and gratitude to God, so that all who heard him were moved to great compassion and tears. After this, mass was celebrated, and the king desired that lauds and benedictions should be sung to God with organs and melodious chant. Then he received the last sacraments, after which he blessed his sons and all who stood by his side, and then the history of the Passion was read to him ; and near the end of the Gospel of St. John, he expired in the arms of the Seigneur de la Riviere.”\*

Is it not true, that the death of these Catholic kings was a sublime and instructive spectacle ? But, that our knowledge may extend to the full, let us go now and mark the mien worn at the last by those men, whose profession of arms, and lives spent amidst the distractions of war, would lead one to fear that their’s, at least, could not have been a holy death. We shall find that, in the middle ages, even these rough warriors, who died begging pardon and pardoning all the world, corresponded in their last moments, in some degree, with that type of sanctity, which faith had so widely diffused ; and that they were far from experiencing those fearful horrors and dreadful agitations, which attend the departure of those who die the death that hath no end. To most of them, one might have applied the words of Macbeth, alluding to Duncan,—“He is in his grave. After life’s fitful fever, he sleeps well.” For mark their last moments. Behold them heavy with death, bowed unto the ground, yet making “their eyes unfolded upward, gates to heaven”——

“Praying forgiveness of th’ Almighty Sire  
Amidst that cruel conflict, on their foes,  
With looks that win compassion to their aim.”

Such spirits Dante found in Purgatory. They said to him,

“—————We all  
By violence died, and to our latest hour  
Were sinners, but then warn’d by light from heaven,  
So that, repenting and forgiving, we  
Did issue out of life at peace with God,  
Who with desire to see him, fills our hearts.”†

In the same circle Manfredi appears to him, and says,

---

\* Christine de Pisan, *Livre des Fais et Bonnes Meurs du Sage Roy, Charles V.* lib. iii. chap. 71.

† Purg. v.

“——When by two mortal blows  
My frame was shatter'd, I betook myself  
Weeping to him, who of free will forgives.  
My sins were horrible; but so wide arms  
Hath goodness infinite, that it receives  
All who turn to it.”

Further on he meets a spirit, who can give a more consoling history of his end. “Wounded I came to the bank of Archiano,

“——Fleeing away on foot,  
And bloodying the plain. Here sight and speech  
Fail'd me: and finishing with Mary's name,  
I fell, and tenantless my flesh remain'd.”

Shakspeare makes Hotspur exclaim, when Prince Henry's sword had robbed him of his youth, that he could prophesy, but that the earthy and cold hand of death lay on his tongue.

When William the Conqueror was laid on his deathbed, he confessed aloud to many priests, and in the presence of the nobles of England and Normandy, all the sins of his life from his youth, and then, with many tears, implored their suffrage. Villars, in a later age, furnishes another example. Wounded at the battle of Malplaquet, he is in such danger, that it is proposed he should receive the sacraments, and in private. “No, no,” said he, “since the army has not been able to see Villars die like a hero, it shall see him die like a Christian.”

But what shall we say of death as connected with that chivalry, which, in the middle ages, sought to restore to the Church the cradle of Christianity, and to their arts the ancient country, which pushed forward its forests of brilliant lances to the summit of the Alps and of the Pyrenees? Let the Muse of Tasso come to our aid. Hear how Godfrey, unmoved in look, in gesture, or in thought, addresses the Christian warriors on the approach of the Pagan host:—

“——A crown prepare you to possess  
Of martyrdom, or happy victory;  
For this I hope, for that I wish no less,  
Of greater merit and of greater glory.  
Brethren, this camp will shortly be  
A temple sacred to our memory,  
To which the holy men of future age,  
To view our graves, shall come in pilgrimage.”\*

And hear again how he speaks of the crusaders slain:—

“But such a death and end exceedeth all  
The conquests vain of realms, or spoils of gold;  
Nor aged Rome's proud stately capitol  
Did ever triumph yet like their's behold;  
They sit in heaven on thrones celestial,  
Crowned with glory for their conquest bold.  
But thou who hast part of thy race to run,  
With haps and hazards of this y'toss'd,  
Rejoice, for those high honours they have won,  
Which cannot be by chance or fortune cross'd.”†

But why have recourse to poetic fabling, when history is so rich in splendid instances? Ulrich Baier, the Komthun of Tapiau, fell in the

\* Book viii. 15.

† Book viii. 44.



battle of Sudauen, in the year 1281, fighting against the infidels in Prussia. "His death," says the historian, "was felt bitterly by the whole Teutonic order. As he had wished, so he died: like his Saviour, he had received four wounds in his hands and feet, and the mortal wound in his heart. By his side lay four other knights slain. His wish was, 'Ut possem vulnerari ab eis V vulneribus, sicut Christus pro me fuerat vulneratus:'\* and the historian relates, 'Recipit in pedibus et manibus vulnera et quintum in corde.'" In fine, the death of the laity, in ages of faith, had often all those characteristic features of a sanctified and blessed end, which have appeared so admirable in men whose lives had been wholly and professedly devoted to God. John Corvinus, waivode of Transylvania, general of the army of the Hungarian king, who saved that country from the Turks, and one of the greatest heroes of Christendom, when on his death-bed, would not allow them to administer to him in his apartment the last assistance of religion; for such was his devotion, full of reverence, that he caused himself to be carried into the church. Priuli, the illustrious doge of Venice, whose life is recorded in a curious manuscript in the Library of St. Mark, in like manner, received the last consolations of religion in the church. He expired immediately after receiving the holy communion, with the words, "In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum et populum meum." St. Homobonus, a married tradesman or merchant, a native of Cremona, died like some blessed monk or confessor. In the year 1197, going one night, according to his custom, to matins, sound and well, to the church of St. Giles, after the office he applied himself to prayer before a crucifix, where he remained till the first mass, and when the priest had said the Gloria in Excelsis, he extended his arms in form of a cross, and without any sickness or noise, rendered up his soul to God, and was buried in that church, amidst the tears and regrets of all the people.

But why do I speak only of men, since we find that, in these devout ages, neither the weakness of age or sex was able to counteract the sublime and wondrous influence of religion in annihilating the terrors incident to our nature at the prospect of its change? As we have already seen, sweet, and in an especial degree blessed, was the death of youth. What a beautiful description of a holy end is given by Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, describing that of a certain good youth, whom he calls his dear child John, whose puerile innocence was united with such a promise of future fruit?† It is related of a certain student in an English Catholic college, who died in his fourteenth year, that being asked by a priest whether he had a great love for Jesus Christ, he replied, "O my sweet Jesus, thou knowest that I love thee with my whole heart," and that saying these words, he expired. The description of the death of many of the young students in the college of St. Acheul, recalls the most affecting incidents in the history of a St. Stanislaus or a St. Louis Gonzaga. Drexelius speaks of an innocent little boy, who, in dying, seemed at first in great pain and anguish, till opening his eyes suddenly, and looking up to heaven, he assumed instantly a joyful smile, and even laughed aloud, so that the persons present doubted not that he was consoled by a vision of angels. "William Elfinston, when a youth, ad-

\* Dusburg, c. 101.

† Epist. lib. iv. 42.

mitted into the society of Jesus, after a month was seized with a mortal illness. The joy which he expressed in countenance and in words was incredible, never ceasing to return thanks to God. At length he broke out into an ecstasy, and asked the persons present if they did not see the angel with whom he spoke? and some one asking what was the appearance of the angel, he replied that he resembled a certain youth who happened to be present. Thus in great joy and sweetness did his soul depart to Christ.”\*

Equally remarkable was the firmness evinced by those who were in the weakness of life's extremest verge. The old died like the young. The Egyptians, as Pliny relates, thought that the human heart diminished with age, so that, after a hundred years, its decrease would necessarily occasion death. Had they been familiar with examples like the preceding, the absurdity of such an idea would have struck them, judging only from the moral effects which were displayed in the benignity, cheerfulness, and magnanimous resolution with which old men died. St. Gregory compares the human life to three watches of the night. The death of the aged, in fact, corresponded with the state of those who kept the third watch, and who already beheld the dawn.

But how wondrously was the power of faith displayed in enabling the weak and timid sex to meet death with heroic courage, with a profound and smiling calm, with an unshrinking, unconquerable reliance on the promises of religion! When the venerable Mother de Chantal was on her death-bed, as the clergy repeated round her the prayers of the Church for the recommendation of the soul, she listened with great attention, and evinced a sublime tranquillity. Several times she was overheard exclaiming in the midst of the service, “My God, what beautiful prayers!”† That illustrious woman prayed with her last breath, evincing an evenness of mind, shaped as if with an especial view to astonish the schools of old philosophy, which never condescended to describe a woman's death. That remark, “What beautiful prayers!” would have filled Plato with admiration, if not with envy.

St. Rusticule, abbess of the convent which St. Cæsareus had founded at Arles, died in the year 632. Her last sickness is thus described:—“It happened on a certain Friday, that after singing vespers as usual with her nuns, perceiving herself fatigued, she went beyond her strength in making the usual reading; she knew that she was shortly to pass to our Lord. On the Saturday morning she felt cold, and lost the use of her limbs. Lying down on a little bed, she was seized with fever, but she never ceased praising God, with her eyes raised to heaven. She commended to Him her daughters, whom she was about to leave orphans, and with a firm soul she comforted those who wept around her. She found herself still worse on Sunday; and as it was her custom that her bed should only be made once a year, the servants of God begged permission to give her a less hard bed, but she would not consent. On the Monday, which was the day of St. Laurence, she lost all strength, and her breathing became difficult. At this sight the sad virgins of Christ poured forth tears and sighs. It being the third hour of the day,

---

\* Drexelius, *Tribunal Christi*, lib. i. cap. 10.

† Marsolier, *vie de Mde. de Chantal*, ii. 180.

as the congregation, in its affliction, repeated the Psalms in silence, the holy mother, in displeasure, asked, 'Why she did not hear the chanting of Psalmody?' The nuns replied, 'That they could not sing through grief.' 'Only sing still louder,' she replied, 'in order that I may receive the benefit of it; for that is very sweet to me.' The next day, her body having hardly the power of motion, her eyes, which preserved their lustre, shone like the stars, and looking on all sides, and not being able to speak, she made signs with her hand, that they should cease weeping, and be comforted. When one of the sisters felt her feet, she said it was not yet time; but shortly after, at the sixth hour of the day, with a serene countenance, and eyes that seemed to smile, this glorious and blessed soul passed to heaven, and joined the innumerable choir of saints.\* The Countess de Russelmonde, who died a Carmelite, desired that the Passion of Christ might be read to her in her last moments. She continued to indicate where the reader ought to pause, till he pronounced the words, "Tradidit spiritum;" and at that moment her spirit departed. Drexelius speaks of a holy matron who died smiling, so that a sweet smile remained on her features after death.† But the affecting account which St. Jerome gives of the death of the venerable Paula surpasses, in interest, every description that we could find elsewhere:—"This illustrious woman," he says, "perceived that her last hour was at hand; but calm and joyous, as if she was about to leave strangers, and to revisit her family, she repeated the words of the Psalm: 'O Lord, I have loved the beauty of thy house, and the place which is the habitation of thy glory.'‡ 'How beautiful are thy tents, O God, of virtue; my soul desireth after thee, and rejoiceth, in hope of being admitted into the abode of the Lord.'§ And, 'I had rather be the last in the house of my God than dwell in the tent of the sinner.'§ And when I asked her, why she kept silence, and did not answer, and whether any thing caused her grief, she said to me, in the Greek language, that she felt no regret, but that she was absorbed in the contemplation of that rest and perfect tranquillity to which she was approaching. This answer was the last that she uttered. She closed her eyes, and, as if quite detached from all mortal things, she was only occupied in murmuring, with a voice almost unintelligible, the sacred texts which I have repeated. She placed her finger on her mouth, to trace upon her lips the sign of Christ, and then she fell into her agony: her soul, ready to fly away, summoned her last strength previous to the dissolution of life, to give thanks to the Lord. There were there many holy bishops, and several priests and Levites, who had come from Jerusalem and other cities adjacent. Troops of monks and virgins filled the whole monastery. As soon as Paula had heard the words of the Canticle, 'Rise my well-beloved, my Dove; behold the Winter is passed, and has withdrawn, behold the rain has ceased,'\*\* she made a last effort, and replied, 'The flowers have covered the earth, and it is time to gather them;†† yes, 'I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.'‡‡ And with these words she expired. Then there was

\* Acta Sancti. Ord. Benedict., tom. ii. 146. † Thom. Cantips. lib. ii. Mirac. c. 50.

‡ Ps. xxv. 8.

§ Ps. lxxxiii. 2.

§ Id.

\*\* Cant. ii. 10.

†† Cant. ii. 11.

‡‡ Ps. xxvi. 13.



no sound heard of weeping or lamentation as at the last moments of people of this world, but all resounded with the music of sacred hymns. The holy bishops themselves took up the body of the deceased, and a certain number of the priests accompanied it with lighted tapers, while others chanted psalms. It was deposited in the grotto where the Saviour was born, having been conducted by an immense multitude, which this pious ceremony had collected from all the cities of Palestine. No solitary recluse for that day wished to remain in his retreat, and there was no virgin who did not leave her cell. It would have been deemed by every one an impiety not to have hastened to show the last honours to the illustrious deceased. Widows and the poor wept while they showed the vestments which they owed to her charity, and all the unhappy whom she had consoled, cried out, that they had lost their mother. It was astonishing to observe that death had not changed her countenance. A sweet calm, mixed with gravity, was painted on all her features; so that she seemed not dead, but sleeping a peaceful sleep. The prayers for her were continued during the whole week. The following was her epitaph:—"Paula, descendant of the Gracchi, sprung from the illustrious blood of the great Agamemnon, Paula, who owed her origin to the celebrated Scipio, reposes in this tomb. She was the mother of Eustochium: her rank was illustrious here below among the Roman nobility, but she renounced vain earthly honours to imitate the poverty of Christ, and she came to conceal her life in Bethlehem."\*

Such, then, are a few of the examples which the history of the ages of faith affords us, when we examine it in reference to the mourning of men in their last hours, and in their death. Such was the manner of their departing. Thus simply and sweetly did they die, without any affectation of false philosophy evincing the insincerity and pride of a Possidonius, or desire of acting a scene to receive the plaudits of fellow-creatures, springing from that lofty and vain exaggeration of soul which seemed so magnificent to Cicero. Had we sufficient time to develope fully this view of history, and to point out all the collateral instruction to be derived from it, the present would be an excellent occasion for exposing the insane presumption of those innovators, who asserted and attempted to prove, by theological reasoning, that faith and true piety had perished in the middle ages—for there was then nothing singular or extraordinary in the scenes which are here described. Here were no doctrines contrary to what was professed by the universal Church. It was the spirit of the times to die thus. I know, indeed, that the best answer to the propositions of heresy would be found in the lives and writings of these children of grace; but, methinks, even in their death, they supply us with enough to disprove the calumny of their adversaries, and to answer the ends of a solid and practical refutation. But the limits appointed to our course will not permit any further delay: let the reader pursue the inquiry for himself: for us it will be sufficient to take leave of the subject with the words of the sacred page, "*Ecce quomodo moritur justus, et nemo percipit corde: et viri justi tolluntur, et nemo considerat.*" However, somewhat still remains to be done; for as it seemed best not to interrupt these narratives, to explain as they occurred

---

\* S. Hieronymi Epist. ad Eustochium, Virg.

the many things contained in them which, in an historical and philosophic sense, deserve particular attention, it will be necessary now to retrace our steps, taking a brief survey of them in general, in order to complete our view of the character which the mourning attendant upon death had assumed, and of the duties and manners to which it gave rise. In the first place, we must have been struck with the uniformity which distinguished the monastic observances in regard to death. In fact, these, which recalled but the customs of the primitive Christians, were every where nearly the same. "When a monk was sick, and in prospect of death, a servant brother was appointed, who should have nothing else to do but to tend him day and night. The cross was placed before his face, and every night a wax taper was kept burning by his side until broad day. Monks were allowed to be in attendance on him in order to sing the regular hours, and to read the Passion in his extremity. The servants, who had experience in such things, were to watch the proper moment, and to spread the ashes, and gently to place the sick man upon them, and then to give a signal, by striking the door of the cloister, when all the brethren were to run to the chamber, for this was one of the two occasions when it was permitted them to depart from their usual measured pace, the other being in the event of fire. If mass should be celebrating, or any regular office, all who were without the choir were to hasten, but those within were to remain. If the monks were in the refectory, the reading was to be instantly suspended, and the monks were to hasten. The litany was then to be chanted, and the prayers according to the progress of his agony.\*

The manner of professing penitence by the reception of ashes was well known, as Mabillon shows in the sixth age. Thus Severus Sulpicius describes the death of St. Martin, who, in his last hour, desired his disciples to prepare some vile couch for his body, saying, "Non decet filii Christianum nisi in cinere et cilicio mori." On these occasions, the sack-cloth was spread on the ground, ashes were strewed upon it in form of a cross, and the persons who assisted a dying person gently placed him upon it. The laity often observed this custom at their death, as we have seen recorded of Louis VI. of France, and Henry III. of England. The monk of St. Denis also relates that Louis IX. gave up the ghost on sack-cloth and ashes, and with his arms composed in form of a cross.† It was a pious custom, as early as in the sixth century, for Christians, in their last hours, to be carried into the church to die before the altar. This appears in the acts of Saints Benedict, Maur, Gilda, and others; and Bede gives a similar account of the death of St. Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne. Universally, the image of our Lord on the cross was placed before the bed of the dying man. "Sometimes it happens," says a holy priest, writing at the time when modern manners had superseded those of faith, "that, on being called to assist at the last moments of some noble, there is not one crucifix to be found in all his superb apartments, where such care has been taken to leave no material want unsupplied. At length, some one recollects, that on the upper story of the same hotel, immediately beneath the tiles of the roof, there lives some

\* Antiq. Consuetud. Cluniacens. Monastic. cap. 29. Apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. iv.

† Mabillon Præfat. in 1. Sæcul. Benedict. § 9.

poor man, some young scholar, and it is suggested that, of course, he must have a crucifix. Then they hasten to make known their wants, and there they find a cross; and this poor man, or this scholar, lends it to the dying rich man, who at least is presented in his agony with that image which is designed to console those who in their lives have known the labours of men. When Cæsar fell, he had no object before him but the stern countenance of that great Pompey, whose dread form, carved in stone, as we yet behold it, can inspire only awe; but, in Christian ages, there were few places in which a man could die without having his last looks directed to some cross, the emblem of hope and mercy! The Maid of Orleans asked for a crucifix at her death, when every form of horror was accumulated. An Englishman broke a stick in two parts, and made a cross: the maid took it, kissed it, pressed it to her bosom, and mounted the pile. Mention has been made also of the death-taper. This alludes to the lighting that blessed candle which seems so odious to the children of this world, but so full of joy to the just: it signified the light of faith and the lucid mansions, and it was used to dispel the fears of the departing soul. The body itself, when it lay without a name, seemed to partake of the new and blessed form of death. The temperate and austere discipline of Catholics was favourable to the delicate susceptibility of noble natures; for to them it is an agreeable thought, that the body should not become a rich feast for disgustful worms, and a vast receptacle for pestiferous exhalations. The spectacle of a rich epicure within his shroud, or of one of these modern philosophers with whom he who dines best to the last makes the best end, would be almost enough to induce such men to fly to a monastery, where death would be stripped even of what seemed horrible to the senses, and where even the body would seem to participate in the soul's purity. In bequeathing his body to the earth, the man of temperate and austere habits might generally say, with the old poet of France, "*Les vers n'y trouveront grand graisse.*"

Speaking of the beautiful appearance of the body of Dom Basile after death, the father abbot of La Trappe says, "It is true that it is one of the privileges of the servants of Jesus Christ, as the Holy Ghost teaches us, not to know either the deformity, or the horror, or the necessity of death. *Non tanget illos tormentum mortis; visi sunt oculis insipientium mori.*"\* Describing the convent of the Carmelites at Nicopie, in Cyprus, brother Nicole, the pilgrim, relates "that it was founded by French noblemen, and that there rests there the body of John de Montfort, *tres tout entier, et est le plus beau mort qu'onques fut veu dessus la terre.*"

Again, allusion is often made to the custom which became pretty general, of laymen assuming a religious habit at their death. Thus, in the Saxon Chronicle, we read, "In the year 1056, died Earl Odda, whose body lies at Pershore, and who was admitted a monk before his end: a good man and virtuous, and truly noble."† Milton is pleased to be very facetious on this subject,—speaking of those

— "Who, to be sure of Paradise,  
Dying, put on the weeds of Dominic,  
Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised."



But, not to observe what a remarkable testimony was here furnished to the celestial virtues which were recognized in the members of these holy and blessed orders, it is well known to all who are correctly taught in Chronic lore, that this was a practice observed by men of saintly lives, and that it did imply a voluntary renunciation of the world, not only because men naturally cling to the most unsubstantial image at their death, and cherish remembrances of the dignities and titles of the profession in which they had previously lived, but also because by this act they were, in the event of their recovery, bound to continue in the observance of that religious life which they had embraced in their sickness; for those who, under such circumstances, had received the monastic habit, and who were styled "*monachi ad succurrendum*," had not liberty to return to the world on their recovery. This being known to every one, the act was certainly less indicative of a superstitious veneration than of a conversion of the heart to God. In Spain, such men were entitled confessors, as Ducange proves in his Glossary.

A memorable instance of the scrupulous exactness with which this discipline was observed, is furnished in the history of Spain. Wamba, king of the Visigoths had drunk poison. When the bishops and the chieftains beheld him lying senseless, immediately they administered to him the order of confession and penitence; or, in other words, they gave him the monastic habit; and when this holy king had recovered from the effect of the poison, understanding that orders had been imposed upon him, he retired to a monastery, and there, as long as he lived, he remained in religion. This is the account given by Alfonso, Bishop of Salamanca; but the passage is explained by ancient Spanish writers, who say that the king at the time had expressly demanded the habit of religion.\* Many princes became monks *ad succurrendum*. Thus Lothaire, son of Louis-le-Debonnaire, was made a monk in sickness at Prumia, and soon after died. The *Frates ad succurrendum* were inscribed on the boards of the monastery, as persons partaking of the suffrages. Thus, John Commenæus, Emperor of the Greeks, has a place in the Necrology of the Abbey of St. Martin apud Laudunum. The words are, "*XV. Kal. Maii commemoratio Jonanis Imperatoris hujus ecclesiæ Fratris ad succurrendum.*"†

With respect to the moral characteristics of death in the ages of faith, many peculiarities must have excited attention in the preceding series of examples.

In the first place, what repeated allusions are made to the foreknowledge of death, and to its announcement in a supernatural manner! St. Francis Xavier told a certain merchant named Veglio, who was a holy man, that when the wine in his glass should taste bitter, it would be a signal to him to prepare for death. The event fulfilled the prediction.‡ In many ancient church windows, as well as on the hangings in the choir of Westminster Abbey, was represented the story of the forewarning of death, made to king Edward the Confessor, by some pilgrims, who came to him from Jerusalem and gave him a ring which he had before secretly given to a poor man that asked his charity in the

\* Mabillon *Præfat.* in iv. *Sæcul. Benedict.* § cap. 7.

† *Id.* *Præfat.* in iii. *Sæcul.* § 1.

‡ *Bonhours Vie de S. S. F. X.* ii. 178.

name of God and of St. John the Evangelist, for it is said that he never refused any man who asked alms in the name of St. John, and he had nothing to give at that moment but the ring from his finger. Machiavel relates, "that the Duke of Milan had a strong presentiment of his death; for on the morning of St. Stephen's day when he was assassinated, after putting on his cuirass to proceed in solemn state to the church of St. Stephen, he took it off again, and said that he would hear mass that day in the castle chapel, and hearing that his almoner was already departed for St. Stephen's with all the ornaments of his chapel, he desired that the Bishop of Como might supply his place; but as the Bishop was unable to do so, he was obliged to proceed to the church where his murderers were waiting for him."\*

Hugo Flaviniacensis, in the chronicle of Verdun, relates that Odilia, the daughter of Count Herimann, being told that she was to die on the following day, by Richard Abbot of St. Vito, prepared herself accordingly, and expired suddenly on the morrow while they were praying around her, and strange to hear, administering to her the sacred oil, though previously without illness. What remarkable instances, too, are recorded of men being apprized in a manner supernatural of the death of others at a distance!

St. Gregory of Tours relates, "that the blessed Severinus, Bishop of Cologne, on a Sunday morning after matins, going about as usual with his clerks, heard a chorus of angels in the sky, and he knew that it arose from the fact, that the soul of St. Martin was at that moment departing, and so the event proved."† Now it is true, that St. Gregory of Tours has collected many reports, to some of which it is difficult to give perfect credence; but what shall we say of the fact of St. Ambrose, while celebrating mass at Milan, having been miraculously made acquainted with St. Martin's death at Tours? St. Hugo, the sixth abbot of Cluny, and St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, died both on the same night, and a holy monk had a vision at the time announcing their death.‡ The venerable Bede has another most remarkable instance. "The same night in which St. Hilda died in her monastery at Whitby, it pleased the Almighty, by a manifest vision, to make known her death in a distant monastery, which is called Hakenes. There was in this house a certain nun named Begu, who had served our Lord in a monastic conversation upwards of thirty years. She being then at rest in the dormitory of the sisters, heard on a sudden, in the air, the accustomed sound of the bell, which used to awaken and call them to prayers when any one of their community was taken out of this world; upon which opening, as she imagined, her eyes, she saw the top of the house uncovered, and a light from above filling all the place: which, when she had attentively considered, she saw in that same light the soul of the said servant of God going up to heaven, attended and conducted by angels; upon which, immediately rising in terror, she ran to the nun who then presided in the monastery in place of the Abbess Frigyth, and with many tears and sighs, told her that the Abbess Hilda, the mother of them all, was departed this life, and had ascended in her sight, encircled with an immense light, to the mansion of light eternal, and to the happy society

\* Hist. of Florence, lib. vii. † Mirac. cap. 4. 5. ‡ Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 438.

of the citizens of heaven. The other hearing this, called up all the sisters, and assembling them in the church, admonished them to pray and sing psalms for the soul of their mother, which having performed during the remainder of the night, they were informed by the brethren who came there in the morning from Whitby, that she had departed from this world at the same hour in which the vision was seen. This is the account given by Bede. One might multiply these examples, and relate how, in the year 660, on the sixteenth of January, St. Furcy departed this life, in the village called Massiere, in Picardy, and the same hour appeared to Count Haymond, in sacerdotal vestments, attended by a deacon and subdeacon, with a lighted taper in his hand, saying, "that according to his promise he was come to wish him farewell before leaving the world;" but as accounts of this kind are familiar to every one, it is of more importance to call the attention to those memorable records of predicted, or rather of demanded death, which are found in the most authentic histories.

In 1312, Ferdinand IV., King of Spain, was summoned to appear before the tribunal of Christ, within thirty days, by the two brothers, Peter and John, of the order of Caravalla, who were unjustly condemned to death upon the charge of having murdered Benavidius during the siege of Alcaodela, which was then in the hands of the Moors. Upon the thirtieth day, which was the seventh of the Ides of September, he was found dead in his bed, to which he had retired in perfect health, so that among the Kings of Castille, he received the name of Ferdinandus in *jus vocatus*.\* Walter Burgensis, Bishop of Poitiers, unjustly accused and deposed by Pope Clement V., bore the injury with patience; but dying, for the sake of example to others, caused these words to be written on his tomb: "*ad justum Dei judicium appello*." Clement read the inscription, and did justice to his memory; but of his death, connected also with the summons of the Grand Master of the Templars, Drexelius declines to speak. Agrestius reviled and calumniated St. Columban after his death. Eusladius the Abbot, disciple of St. Columban, summoned the calumniator to appear before the tribunal of Christ within the year. Before the term was complete, Agrestius met with his death by the hands of his own slave.† Philip, King of France, solemnly cited to appear before the divine judgment within the year, by the Grand Master of the Templars, died on the twenty-ninth of November of that year. Francis Duke of Brittany, receiving back his brother Giles, who had been in England for his education, cast him into prison upon a false charge of treason and put him to death. The innocent youth cited his brother to appear with him before the tribunal of God within the year; Francis died of the dropsy before the term expired.‡ Nantinus, Count of Angouleme, cited to judgment before God, by Heraclius the Bishop, expired, crying out that he was summoned by the priest, and that he acknowledged his crimes. || Rodulph, Prince of Austria, unjustly condemning to death a certain knight, who was enclosed in a sack and thrown into the river, the knight, before his

\* Mariana, lib. xv. de reb. Hisp. c. 11.

† Æneas Sylvius, Hist. Europæ, cap. 43.

|| Greg. Turonens. lib. v. Hist. Franc. c. 36.

† Surius, Mense Martio die 29.



head was covered, beheld the duke at a window, and cried out with a loud voice, "Duke Rodolph, I summon you to the tremendous tribunal of Christ, that you may give an account for putting me to death unjustly," he said, and was pressed down, and he disappeared in the waters. The duke laughed at the threat, but before the end of the year he was seized with a fever, which he acknowledged to be the stroke of Heaven calling him to judgment, and he died in horrors.\*

"Oh! how severe God's judgment, that deals out  
Such blows in stormy vengeance——."†

In Ireland Patrick O'Kelly, a bishop, and Conatius Ornarius, a Franciscan friar of noble birth, cast into a dark dungeon by the viceroy, for refusing to acknowledge the queen as head of the church, afterwards cruelly tortured and led to execution, spoke to the people for half an hour, and then turning to the viceroy, cited him to appear before the divine tribunal. They were put to death, and the viceroy proceeded to Limerick, where he fell sick and died on the fourteenth day after receiving this summons.‡ The master of the Teutonic order maliciously condemned to death a young man, against whom he had a private enmity. The youth, on his way to execution protesting his innocence, appealed to the Supreme Arbiter of life and death, and cited his judge to appear within thirteen days. Truly, God despiseth not the supplication of the poor, his eyes are upon the just, and his ears open to their prayers. The youth was executed, and on the thirteenth day, the Teutonic master was struck with sudden death. This happened at Riga in Livonia, in the year 1407, as Albertus Krantzius relates.¶ In the year 1052, the Abbot Herveld was unjustly treated and oppressed by Burchard, Bishop of Halberstad. In vain he defended his cause before the tribunals. On his death-bed he sent for Frederick Count Palatine, and desired him to bear this message to the bishop, "that he was dying without redress, having been too weak to gain justice, but that he appealed to God, and that they should both appear before his judgment seat within a few days." The abbot died, and in the course of a few days, as the bishop was mounting his horse, he was seized with a sudden illness, which left him only time to confess that he was hurried away to answer before the divine tribunal, and there to be judged.§ The abbot of the monastery of St. James at Leodium, being attacked by the governor and condemned by the bishop on account of his refusing to give up a certain young nobleman who wished to remain in the monastery, finding that he could gain no justice on earth, appealed to the heavenly court, and cited his unjust judge to appear there along with him before forty days. On the fortieth day, about the hour of nones, the abbot died. At the same moment the governor was in a bath, and hearing the convent bell toll for the dead, he asked what it meant, and being informed that the abbot of St. James had just died suddenly, he, who had never forgotten to keep account of the days from the summons given, was seized with terror and astonishment, rising hastily and crying out, "Alas! I must appear this day before the Supreme Judge!" and hardly had he touched the

\* Drexelius *Tribunal Christi*, lib. ii. cap. 3.

† Dante, *Hell* xxiv.

‡ Florimundus Redmundus *de ortu hæres.* cap. 20.

¶ Lib. xiii. *Vandalicæ*, cap. 2.

§ Lambertus Schaffnaburg. *Annal.* apud Baron. tom. ii.

door when he sunk down, and with a dreadful groan expired.\* Otho, the Roman Emperor, being reproved by his son William, the Bishop of Mayence, for his marriage with Adelaide, cast him into prison. The bishop summoned Otho to appear along with him upon the day of Pentecost, before the tribunal of Christ; on that very day, Otho being in Saxony, was struck with sudden death, and his son had ceased to live a short time before.† Baronius denies the truth of this last account, and Drexelius declines pronouncing between the two cardinals.‡

These recitals are not without moral dignity. "History," says a great French writer, "is pleased with things grave and tragic." But they have led us far from the deaths of the just, to which we must now return. Another circumstance which must have struck us in the preceding narrations relative to their end is, the sudden and gentle manner in which the transition so frequently took place, from a state of perfect health to the long expected termination of the mortal course. So that the deaths of the holy and the unjust were so far often similar. Pelisson died suddenly, as if falling asleep, having the day before received the holy communion, a circumstance of which the protestants attempted to avail themselves, asserting that he refused or eluded receiving the sacraments of the church.|| A holy priest of the diocese of Rouen, having begun to say mass, and repeating the words "*introibo ad altare dei*," suddenly dropped down and expired. Many have departed while announcing the word of God to the people. The Cardinal de Berulle died while saying mass at the moment of pronouncing the words of the canon, "*hanc igitur oblationem*." Birnstan, Bishop of Winchester, was a man of the most pure sanctity; every day he used to sing a mass of requiem for the dead, and at night he used fearlessly to walk about alone, repeating the psalms for the salvation of their souls, and of him it is said, that on one occasion, when he had finished the office with the prayer that they might rest in peace, a voice of a great multitude, as if of the dead out of their sepulchres, seemed to respond amen. He used to wash the feet of the poor every day, and give them food, and would then remain alone in prayer. One day being thus employed, without any previous sickness, his spirit departed. His disciples thought him still at his prayers, and suffered a whole day to pass, but on the following morning very early, they broke in and found him dead. The citizens, because of his sudden death, seemed to have forgotten his memory, not knowing that "*non potest male mori qui bene vixerit*."§ Notwithstanding the inference of the people here, this was a maxim well and generally understood during the middle ages. St. Anselm, or some writer of the same age, whose work has been mistaken for that of the Father of the Scholastic Theology, speaks expressly on the question: "Is it an injury to a good man if he be slain or carried off by a sudden death? By no means," is the reply, "For they do not die a sudden death who always remember that they are to die; therefore, whether by the sword or by wild beast, or by flames or waters, or wheels and tor-

\* Thom. Cantipr. lib. ii. de miraculis sui ævi, cap. 35.

† Petrus Damianus, tom. i. Epist. lib. ii. 15.

‡ Tribunal Christi, lib. ii. cap. 3.

|| Hist. de Louis XIV. par De Larrey, an. 1693.

§ Wil. Malmesbur. de Gestis Pontif. Anglor. lib. ii.

ture, or by whatever other mode they die, ‘*Semper pretiosa est in conspectu Domini mors Sanctorum ejus.*’”

Is it of any service to the wicked if they lie for a long time on their beds before death? none whatever; for by whatever death they die, they die an evil and a sudden death who die not in the Lord, and who used never to remember that they were to die.\* Again, have we not remarked with how little fear these just and most humble men contemplated the approach of death? St. Ambrose said when he was dying, “that he had so lived, that he had no sorrow for having lived, and that he did not fear death, knowing that he was in the hands of a good Master.” William of Malmsbury says, “that St. Wlstan was of such simplicity, that he had not the least fear of his agony and death.” “It was,” he says, “*simplicitas nescia de Dei diffidere misericordia.*”† In monasteries, and in them the spirit of the ages of faith is still preserved, there is nothing more striking to a stranger than the tone and looks of the holy religious when they advert to death. When I was lodged in the great monastery of Camaldoli, on the Apennines, one of the aged fathers used always to be carried into the church in a chair. One morning, after a night of dreadful tempest, with thunder and torrents of rain, I was informed by one of the monks, soon after mass, that this Father Francis, whom I had seen that morning as usual in the church, had been attacked with great illness in consequence of the first coming on of the cold of September. “He feels now a little better,” said this monk, but, added he, with a smile that cannot be described by words, so full was it of sweet religious hope and constancy, “he is about to set out on his voyage—the voyage, I mean to eternity.” It is in these holy communities that one may listen with delight and astonishment to the thoughts of faith expressed often in the language of the Phædo. “I should wish to convince you,” will the monk or friar say to us, “that a man who has spent his life in the study of philosophy ought to take courage at his death, and to be full of hope, that he is about to possess the greatest good that can be obtained, which will be in his possession as soon as he dies. Truly it would be ridiculous if, after teaching such lessons all our lives, the moment when death approached, we should grow angry at the thought of meeting what we formerly praised and made the object of our desire. It would be laughable to see a man who had held, that death was only a deliverance from the chains of the body, who after preparing himself for it during his life, should afterwards, when death did arrive, grow indignant at it. Would it not be supremely ridiculous? Certainly it would.”‡ Religion supplied nearly the same words to Montmorency at his death: “Ah, Father,” said he to the priest who came to console him, “it would be disgraceful, after knowing how to live during more than eighty years, not to know how to die during a quarter of an hour.” Everywhere, indeed, there was deep humility and an exclusive reliance on mercy; but every where also we observe the same confidence, the same sweet exalted hope, enabling persons naturally the most scrupulous, susceptible, weak, and timid, to go down to the grave, having, with Adamantine

\* S. Anselmi Elucidarii, lib. ii. cap. 31.

† De Gestis Pontif. Angl. lib. iv.

‡ Plato Phædo, 68.



force of soul, this belief that they would be happy in a life to come. Socrates could only advise men, ἀδαμαντίνως δεῖ δὴ πάντη τὴν δόξαν ἔχοντα, εἰς ἄδου ἵέναι;\* whereas, in many cases, the humblest minister of religion in the ages of faith, could not only counsel, but also enable them to do so. Continued mention was also made of those sweet impressive and tranquil discourses, which were held by these holy men before death, which would have seemed so admirable to the ancient poets, who were fond of converting to dramatic use the novissima verba; and the almost constancy of this phenomena in members of the city of God, at some period previous to their change, would have led Aretæus to abandon his distinction of peculiar maladies in attributing prophetic power to men arrived near the last scene of life. Celebrated with the ancients was the dying chant of the swan, the opinion of which Plato applies in a most splendid passage, to illustrate the happiness of the future world; though naturalists like Ælian, might shock the poetic imagination, by affirming that neither they nor perhaps any one else had ever heard a swan sing.† But to affirm, that the unwonted vivacity of thought and solemnity of feeling of these saintly men when about to leave our world, were like an announcement of their departure with harmonious sounds, and as it were, with sweetest music before they took their flight to heaven, and set out for a happier land, would expose no one to the danger of contradiction, or of being supposed subject to the delusions of their fancy. Socrates discoursing a short time before his death, remarked to his friends, “how proper it was for a person who was about to leave the world, to investigate and to mythologize concerning that passage, as to what he can suppose it to be.”‡ In the ages of faith indeed we do not find dying men engaged in any inquiry or investigation respecting the nature or consequences of death; but like St. Cuthbert dying, they spoke a few but strong words concerning peace and humility. They conversed on the necessity of death for all men, and on the certain truths respecting the future state to which it would introduce them; they spoke with hope of their passing to God and to the company of his saints, with whom it was far better to be than with imperfect men on earth, and these last accents of the mourning dove, must have impressed every one with the conviction that they would soon be comforted amidst the ineffable and eternal joys of the heavenly Jerusalem. When St. Sturm was dying the monks begged that when he was with God he would pray for them: he replied, “Prove yourselves worthy, and be so conducted in your lives that I may justly pray for you, and then I would do what you desire.” The examples which we gave of dying scenes from the histories of the ages of faith might be multiplied without end, and we should find them all characterized by the same astonishing mixture of quiet and sublimity. To conceive them fully, no doubt one ought to have been present; but even after reading the description which is given of them in the simple unstudied language of the middle ages, is it possible to avoid feeling the deepest emotion? Methinks that every one who has attended to them will fancy that he hears a revelation of his own feelings in the account which the friend of Socrates gives of himself, after witnessing that

\* Plato de Repub. lib. x.

† Ælian. Var. Hist. i. 14.

‡ Plato Phædo, 61.

sage's death: "Indeed I experienced impressions that were astonishing while present there; for I felt no compassion on being about to behold the death of a man who was dear to me; for O Echecrates, that man seemed to me to be happy, as I judged from his manner and from his words, so sweetly and so generously did he die; and I felt assured that he did not depart to Hades without a divine destiny, but that arriving there, he would be happy, if ever any one at any time enjoyed happiness. On that account, therefore, I felt no compassion, such as might have been called for from persons who were present at grief; nor, on the other hand, did I feel that pleasure which we were accustomed to experience during our conversation on philosophy, though we then conversed as usual; but without premeditation or art, I suffered a kind of strange impression, an unusual mixture composed both of pleasure and pain, when I reflected that he was to die almost immediately; and all of us who were present experienced nearly the same feelings; at one time weeping, and at another laughing, and one of us, Apollodorus, did nothing but smile."\* Now let the moderns be pleased to take note, that this passage, for which it would be difficult to find a parallel in the sublimest monuments of antiquity, would pass, if it were not for the occasional expression of doubt, almost unnoticed in those thousand chronicles which were composed by monks during, what they term, the dark and barbarous ages.

With respect to the last consolation which religion afforded to the dying, of which mention is so expressly made in the preceding examples, it is not necessary to enter into any detail. Every one knows that the Church has always desired, as St. Augustin says, alluding to the sacrament of reconciliation, "that none of her children should depart from this life without the pledge of her peace!"† Extreme unction, or, as it was called in the middle ages, sacred unction, for the former term is not found in any author before the twelfth century,‡ was received, as we have seen, generally in the Church, for it was administered to persons who still had sufficient strength to receive it kneeling. The popular custom of wishing to defer it to the last moments arose from a superstition originating in England, and thence spreading into France, which made the people suppose that, after having received it, it was not lawful, in the event of recovery, to walk, excepting barefoot, or to make use of marriage. Several provincial councils were obliged to denounce this superstition, as tending to deprive the faithful of the remedy provided for them by the Church. This sacramental rite had always been administered uninterruptedly, both in the Latin and Greek churches, from the time of the Apostles. Though it is not expressly treated of by many of the early fathers, because it never was attacked by heretics, it is, however, mentioned by Origen, St. John Chrysostom, St. Innocent I., St. Cæsarius of Arles, St. Gregory the Great, and by Venerable Bede, who affirms it to be practised by the Church in conformity to apostolic usage. In the middle ages, it was the custom for many priests to be present at the administration of this sacrament; but, after the thirteenth century, in the Latin Church, this usage gave place to the present discipline, though

\* Plato Phædo.

† Lib. i. de Adult. Conjug. cap. xxviii.

‡ Mabillon de Stud. Monast. pars ii. c. xiii.

the faithful were still recommended to invite for this purpose as many ecclesiastics as could conveniently attend. In connection with the assistance afforded to the dying, we should particularly remark the sincerity and courage with which, whatever might be the circumstances of their condition, they were always warned of their danger. Behold Louis XI. fortified, walled in, encaged, as it were, in his castle of Plessis. Neither his son nor those charged with his domestic service could penetrate to him. One could only enter his chamber by means of a staircase, cut in the centre of a thick wall; yet there did the Church supply him with a voice of severe and frank warning. His death was announced to him as abruptly, as plainly, as if he had been a poor peasant—"Sire, pensez à votre conscience; il est fait de vous; il n'y a nul remède." When the martial King, Edward the Third, was lying on his bed at the point of death, forsaken, and even plundered by his former favourites, one of whom took the ring from his finger, amongst so many there was only present at that time a certain priest, other of his servants applying the spoil of what they could lay their hands on, who, lamenting the king's misery, and inwardly touched with a grief of heart, that among so many counsellors there was none that would minister unto him the word of life, came boldly unto him, and admonished him to lift up the eyes, as well of his body as of his heart, unto God, and with sighs, to ask mercy of Him whose majesty he well knew he had grievously offended. Whereupon the king listened to the words of the priest; and, although a little before he had wanted the use of his tongue, yet, then, taking strength, he seemed to speak what was in his mind; and then, what for weakness of his body, contrition of his heart, and sobbing for his sins, his voice and speech failed him, and scarce half pronouncing the word *Jesu*, he gave up the ghost at his manor of Sheene. Meschinot, who always lived with princes, being personally attached to the dukes of Brittany, takes care to remind them of death in bold and simple language—

"Princes, vous n'êtes d'autre alloi  
Que le pauvre peuple commun.  
Faites-vous sujets à la loi,  
Car certes vous mourrez comme un  
Des plus petits."\*

From admonitions of the same frankness, the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries were not exempt, as the following instance will show. John de la Moote, the thirty-first abbot of St. Albans, in the reign of King Richard II., being at Tytenhangre, was suddenly attacked with a fatal pleurisy after mass on All-Saints. The monks of the abbey hastened to his assistance. William Wynteshal, his confessor, arrived there at three in the morning, and addressed him in these words: "The physicians have certain signs of your approaching death, and that you will soon be deprived both of reason and memory; therefore, I require you to attend to the salvation of your soul while any vigour remains; then and next, make restitution if you have defrauded any body; and lastly, signify your will and pleasure in matters depending between you and our brethren." These instances are worthy of remark, if it were only to show the contrast between the spirit of the middle ages and of our own time. One of the most admired philosophical writers of the day, showing that

---

\* Gouget Bibliotheq. Français, tom. ix. 412.



politeness depends upon the philosophy of mind, observes, that the benevolent poor, who tend the sick with such assiduity, have yet little foresight of the mere pains of thought; and, while in the same situation, the rich and better educated, with equal, or perhaps even with less benevolence of intention, carefully avoid the introduction of any subject which might suggest, indirectly to the sufferer, the melancholy images of parting life, the conversation of the poor, around the bed of their sick friend, is such as can scarcely fail to present to him every moment, not the probability merely, but almost the certainty of approaching death. "It is impossible," he continues, "to be present in these two situations without remarking the benefit of a little knowledge of the human mind, without which, far from fulfilling its real wishes, benevolence itself may be the most cruel of torturers."\* I do not propose that this curious passage should be viewed in connection with those sentences of the *Phædo*, which have been noticed during the course of the present chapter, for a comparison between the modern and ancient philosophy belongs not to our subject; but it is impossible, after hearing the sentiments of men in the ages of faith respecting death, and after witnessing their last moments, not to be struck with amaze at the change which must have taken place in the general disposition of men's minds before a book containing such a passage as that which I have now quoted could have been deemed, by consent of the learned, worthy of a distinguished place among the works of philosophy.

But to return from this digression. It is well known what care was taken that every Christian, sick or dying, at peace with God, should have the consolation and support of receiving the food of angels, the adorable body of Jesus Christ. In the darkest and most tempestuous nights, amid forests and marshy wastes, the sound of a bell, and the light of a lantern, would announce the passage of a priest with his clerk,† repairing to the hermit's cell, or to the woodman's hut; and then the poor shepherds would hasten to adore their Saviour, and even the robber from the wood would follow at a distance, drawn and fascinated, as it were, by the mysterious attraction of that faith which he had practically renounced, without having ever been entirely able to expel it from his heart. The zeal and charity with which the dying were assisted during the middle ages tended not a little to impress a new character upon scenes of death. It is recorded of St. Osmond, Bishop of Salisbury, in the eleventh century, that he used to assist criminals at their execution, and would accompany them himself to the scaffold. The Church, in some places, had to remonstrate with the civil power, and in council, at Lambeth, at London, and at Vienne, formerly to condemn the barbarous enactments which attempted to deprive criminals, doomed to death, of the sacrament of penance. Many kings, however, confirmed her decisions by humane laws, as Ethelred, Edward, and Canute, in England, and Charles VI. of France. Many confraternities were established,‡a which even the laity devoted themselves to the pious office of comforting the sick. Spenser, describing a holy hospital, alludes to such persons—

---

\* Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. i. p. 68.

† Statut. Synod. of Troyes de Sacramentis, 8.

“Another had charge sick persons to attend,  
 And comfort those in point of death which lay;  
 For them most needed comfort in the end,  
 When sin, and hell, and death, doe most dismay  
 The feeble soule, departing hence away.  
 All is but lost that living we bestow,  
 If not well ended at our dying day.”

Poor people, with their dying words, would desire that their chamber, and the way by which the adorable sacrament was to pass, the way before Jesus, the King of Glory, the God of men and of angels, the God of heaven and earth, the God of time and of eternity, should be strewed with flowers; and to honour the approach of the same mighty Lord, the apartments of the rich would be adorned with whatever in their possession was the most beautiful and precious. To tender and passionate souls, this hour, when he came to give himself to them, as their viaticum, was the hour long desired and ardently expected—it was the hour of love and of seraphic ecstasy. Nothing then remained but to press the image of Jesus to the bosom, and to wait in silence for the change. This last scene of the solemn act was closed by the Church's holy prayers, which winged the faint soul to mount to heaven, bidding it go forth from this world in the name of God the Father Almighty, who created it, in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of the living God, who suffered for it, in the name of the Holy Spirit, which had been imparted to it: in the name of angels and archangels, in the name of thrones and dominations, in the name of principalities and powers, in the name of cherubim and seraphim, in the name of patriarchs and prophets, in the name of holy apostles and evangelists, in the name of holy martyrs and confessors, in the name of holy monks and hermits, in the name of holy virgins and all the saints of God, that its rest that day might be in peace, and its habitation in holy Sion.

This assistance at death was connected also with many remarkable narratives, which, I believe, would have excited the envy of Cicero, if he could have heard them after composing his Tusculan disputations; for who can doubt but that he would have rejoiced to have been able to adorn his page with such an account as that relating to the bishop in Scotland, who, when travelling alone on horseback among the Highlands, was forced, by a sudden and violent snow-storm, to seek shelter in a poor cottage by the way-side, where he was told that the father of the family was lying in an inner room dangerously ill. Ever attentive to the object of his holy mission, the good bishop desired to see him; and, on being admitted, proceeded to admonish the poor man of his danger; but he replied, that he felt assured of his recovery. As the bishop, however, persisted in showing him the groundlessness of his confidence, and in exhorting him to prepare for death, he confessed the secret cause which made him feel so secure, saying that he was a Catholic, and that during the last thirty years of his life, ever since he had first come into that desolate region, he had prayed to God not to take him from the world without enabling him to receive the last sacraments of holy Church. Pierced to the heart with reverential awe, the saintly bishop told him, that he who stood over him was a priest and a bishop, that he had with him the holy oils and the precious body of our Lord. “Then God has heard my prayer,” cried the dying man, “and now may he let

his servant depart in peace." The bishop administered to him the holy and adorable mysteries of the Church, and before he withdrew the soul was gone to behold its Judge. Equally interesting is the account given of a priest who was hastening on his errand of blessed charity, one dark and stormy night, through some of the most obscure lanes in London, to bear assistance to some poor dying person in that neighbourhood. As he passed, suddenly the ground gave from under his feet, and he was precipitated through one of those cellar entrances which in some quarters of the capital are so frequently to be found adjacent to the wall. Recovering from the first shock, a deep moan, proceeding as if from the farthest end of this sombre vault, engaged all his attention. "In God's name who are you, and where am I fallen?" asked the priest. "I know you," replied a feeble voice; "you are a priest of the holy Church, come to console me at my death." A child now came up to him, whom the priest, with entreaties and charges of authority, prevailed upon to ascend into the street, in order to procure a light. But the narrative is soon concluded: this poor dying person received from the priest's hands the last consolations of religion, and then expired in his arms.

We have seen the consolations administered to the dying, but what was the condition of the surviving friends after the departure of him whom they loved, and what was the character of their mourning? Let the answer be sought in the writings of the ages of faith. In the first place, they were desired to make use of the assistance of reason and natural wisdom, as far as it was in the order of Providence that it should console them. To this St. Basil appeals in writing to the widow of Arintheus, saying, "He was a man, and he is dead, like Adam, like Abel, like Noah, like Abraham, like Moses, like all that has ever been great among men." It is the same spirit which dictates that striking reply in Shakspeare, on hearing that the Lady Macbeth is dead—

"She should have died hereafter.

There would have been a time for such a word."

But to these considerations of natural wisdom were added the supernatural consolations of faith, which reminded men not only of the necessity, but of the happiness of dying. "How many times," says St. Cyprian, "my dearest brethren, hath God deigned to charge me openly,—me, humble and weak creature, to announce to you in my sermons, that we ought not to weep for those of our brethren whom the Lord has delivered from the world, since we know well that they are not lost, but only sent before us; and that, in their departing, they only precede us like travellers, and those who make voyages on the sea; that we ought to regret them, but not to lament them with cries; that we ought not to clothe ourselves with garments of mourning, when they have assumed in heaven the bright white robe; that we ought not to give the Gentiles an occasion to reproach us for weeping on account of those who we say live with God, as if they were for ever plunged in the abyss of annihilation. We betray our hope and our faith."\* Hear again how St. Basil writes to a mourning father,—“As the Lord hath

---

\* On the Necessity of Dying.



established us to be, as it were, a second father to all Christians, we have regarded, as personal to ourselves, the affliction which you have experienced in the death of your blessed son. Upon hearing the deplorable details, we were at first moved, after the manner of men; but upon recollection, and as soon as we had considered this event with the eyes of faith, we asked pardon of God for having suffered our soul to be carried away by the force of passions; and we encouraged ourselves to endure what the ancient sentence of our God hath made the destiny of all mankind. If the life of this young man has not been of long duration here below, every one who reflects for a moment must conclude that this has been one of the greatest favours of heaven towards him. A longer abode upon earth is only a longer subjection to all kinds of evils. He has not known crime; he has never injured his neighbour; he has never been drawn on by unhappy circumstances to mix in the society of the wicked; he has lived exempt from lying, from ingratitude, from avarice, from voluptuous passions, from the vices of the flesh, and from the many other miserable productions of human depravity. His pure and spotless soul has retired from the world to rise to a happier region."

Such is the language of consolation that we find invariably addressed to mourners during the middle ages, and such the sentiments which they themselves expressed, as being their support and encouragement. "Length of time," says Egburg, in a letter to the holy Abbot Winfred, respecting the death of his brother—"length of time will turn my present sorrow into gladness, for it is written, '*Amor hominis adducit dolorem: amor autem Christi illuminat cor.*'" \* Faithful in respect to historical similitude is the description which Tasso gives of the mourning of the Crusaders on the death of Dudon—

"His wailing friends adorn'd the mournful bier  
With woeful pomp, whereon his corpse they laid:  
And when they saw the Bulloigne prince draw near,  
All felt new grief, and each new sorrow made;  
But he, withouten show or change of cheer,  
His springing tears within their fountains staid;  
His rueful looks upon the corse he cast  
Awhile, and thus bespake the same at last:  
We need not mourn for thee, here laid to rest,  
Earth is thy bed, and not thy grave; the skies  
Are for thy soul, the cradle and the nest,  
There live, for here thy glory never dies;  
For like a Christian knight and champion blest,  
Thou did'st both live and die." †

But let us now return to the immediate scene of mourning, to cast one look upon the sheeted dead, and to inquire what duties remain to be accomplished with regard to the departed soul. Durandus says, "That, at the moment of death, the bell was tolled thrice to denote the absolution which had been given to the penitent for the three modes of sin, by thought, word, and work; ‡ and that for a clerk, the bells were tolled as many times as denoted the number of his orders." || It appears that in the time of St. Sturm, Abbot of Fulda, it was the custom to toll

\* S. Bonifac. Mart. et Archiep. Epist. ci.

† Durandi Rationale, lib. vii. c. 35.

‡ Book iii. c. 7.

|| Id. lib. i. c. 4.

the bells for persons in their agony ; for this holy man, at the point of death, ordered the brethren to run to the church, “et omnes gloggas pariter moveri imperavit,” and desired that the assembled brethren might be entreated to pray for him. In England, however, the bell was tolled after death had taken place ; for, as we have seen, Bede, after relating the death of St. Hilda, says, that Begu, a nun of another convent, heard the usual sound of the bell which used to summon them to prayer, “Cum quis de hoc sæculo fuisset evocatus.” At Rheims, the lugubrious tolling of bells, doleful from the jarring of sounds on the death of men, used to be called *l'Abbé mort*, as if the agony of a dying person, *l'Abboy de la mort*, which shows that originally it was also tolled in the last moments of men.\*

With respect to the concluding labours employed in the concerns of the body, the excessive anxiety and pains of the ancients, on these occasions, were no longer required. With them, to wash and anoint the dead body was the only privilege they could bestow upon the dead.† When Agamemnon is slain, the chorus has only to ask—

τίς ὁ θάψων νῦν ; τίς ὁ θρηνησών ;‡

which would have been one of the last inquiries that in Christian ages would have been suggested by the death of a friend. Priam required ten days to prepare for the funeral of Hector ;|| and to describe all that was done on that occasion, would require the unwearied tongue of a Homer himself. But in the middle ages, the ceremonial connected with the body, which followed death, was greatly simplified and curtailed. No one in his last moments was led to fear, by the question of a Crito, that his faith was vain ; and that he had but lost his time in labouring, with a view to the soul's immortality. St. Paul, the hermit, speaks to St. Anthony of his own burial in this style :—“Since the hour of my sleep is arrived, our Lord has sent you to cover this poor body with earth, or rather to commit earth to earth.” So little importance seemed to be attached to the burial even of mighty kings, that strange scenes were sometimes presented, which might have been obviated if there had been greater previous solicitude, or an opinion more generally entertained of the importance of such rites. The salt carriers, who had the privilege of carrying the bodies of the kings of France to the grave, when conveying that of Charles VI. to St. Denis, laid it down in the middle of the way, demanding who was to pay them ? Nothing is more common in the chronicles of the middle ages than to find mention of the express charge given by dying men, and even by great princes, like Philip, Count of Nemours, not only that no extraordinary pains or expense should be employed in their funerals, but even that their bodies should be committed to the ground with marks of indifference or ignominy. “All these things,” says St. Augustin, “the care of a funeral, the kind of sepulture, the pomp of obsequies, are rather comforts for the living than helps for the dead. Many bodies of Christians are scattered naked on the earth ; but Truth itself assures us, that men can do nothing further after they have killed the body. A crowd of servants

\* Mabillon Præfat. in iii. Sæcul. Benedict. § vii.

† Æschyl. Agam. 1546.

‡ Hom. Od.

|| Id. xxiv. 665.

swelled the magnificent convoy of Dives, whose obsequies seemed so splendid in the eyes of men, but much more beautiful in the sight of God was the ministry of angels which bore that poor Lazarus, not into a marble tomb, but into the bosom of Abraham.”\*—“Certain visions are related,” says St. Augustin, “which seem to militate against this opinion; for the dead are said to have sometimes appeared to the living, who knew not where their bodies lay, and to have revealed the spot, in order that they might obtain burial. Were we to answer that these are falsehoods, we should seem to rise insolently against the writings of some of the faithful, and against the sense of those who affirm that such things have happened to themselves; but we may reply, that the living also, without being conscious of it, appear often in dreams to the living; and, therefore, these visions of the dead cannot prove that the departed soul has really returned to instruct them. Such things, perhaps, may be done by angelic operation, without the knowledge of those whose bodies are unburied, by divine command, in order to console the living, or by these admonitions to recommend the humanity of sepulture to the human race, the neglect of which cannot injure the dead, but would argue impiety in the living. Why should we not credit these angelic operations by the dispensation of the Providence of God, exerted towards the good and the evil, according to the unsearchable depth of his judgment, whether the minds of mortals are thence instructed or deceived, consoled or terrified, according as mercy or punishment is due to each from Him whose mercy and judgment are not vainly commemorated by the Church?”† While, therefore, it was believed that this was a matter which did not interest the dead, there was no disposition in the Church to approve of any thing inhuman or extravagant with respect to the burial of the body. The Parthians used to give their dead to be devoured by birds and beasts. The rigid and inhuman sect of the stoics was indifferent, whether the body were to rot below or above ground. It was men like Lucretius and Lucian, who thought that nothing would remain after death, who chiefly ridiculed the care of the dead.

During the ages of faith, there was, in the minds of men, a deep and profound tenderness, an amiable and loving susceptibility, which admitted of nothing harsh or repulsive to the intimate feelings of our poor humanity. “Mary Magdalen,” says St. John of the Cross, “deserved to be the first to behold Jesus Christ after his resurrection, because she remained the last by his sepulchre.” “The bodies of the faithful,” says St. Augustin, “are not to be despised and cast out, since they were the organs and vessels used by the Holy Spirit. Dear and venerable is a paternal vest or ring; and in like manner should we honour the body which was more joined and familiar to us than any garment which we wear, which served not as an external ornament or assistance, but which belonged to the very nature of man. Our Lord commended the woman who had prepared ointments for his burial; and in the Gospel, he is commemorated with praise who diligently and reverently gave him sepulture.”‡ For the same reason were they blessed by King David

\* De Civitate Dei, lib. i. 12. De Cura pro Mortuis.

† De Cura pro Mortuis.

‡ De Civit. Dei, lib. i. 13.



who buried the dry bones of Saul and Jonathan, because no one ever hated his own flesh, and what they wished to be done to themselves when deprived of sense, they did to others who were in that condition.\*

The primitive Christians kept their dead exposed during three days, clothed in precious habits, and watched over them in prayer during the time. Then they carried them to the tomb, bearing lighted tapers, and singing hymns expressive of their hope of the resurrection. They buried with them either the ensignia of their dignity or the instruments of their martyrdom, or phials full of their blood, or the acts of their martyrdom, or crosses, or the book of the Gospel. The body was placed with the face regarding the East.†

St. Anthony, though alone in the desert, having brought out from the cell the dead body of St. Paul the Hermit, sung the hymns and psalms, according, as St. Jerome says, to the Christian tradition.‡ St. Jerome mentions the lights that were borne at the funeral of St. Paula, and notice of them occurs also in the account of that of St. Cyprien.||

The form of monastic burial corresponded with the simplicity of the religious life. We read in the history of the church of Durham, that when any monk was dead there, he was dressed in his cowl and habit, and boots were put on his legs, and immediately he was carried to a chamber called the dead man's chamber, where he remained till night. At night he was removed thence into St. Andrew's Chapel adjoining to the same chamber, and there the body remained till eight o'clock in the morning. The night before the funeral, two monks, either in kindred or kindness the nearest to him, were appointed by the prior to be especial mourners, sitting all night on their knees at the dead man's feet. Then were the children of the Ambrie sitting on their knees in stalls on either side of the corpse, appointed to read David's Psalter, all night over incessantly, till eight in the morning, when the body was conveyed to the chapter-house, where the prior and the whole convent met it, and there did say their dirge and devotion; and then the dead corpse was carried by the monks into the centrygarth, where it was buried, and there was but one peal rung for him.§

Yet the renown of sanctity, and the devotion of the people, often rendered the burial of the religious, scenes of astonishing interest. Neither the pomp of the funeral of kings, nor the triumphs of the ancient conquerors, were more solemn than the convoy of the body of the humble St. Martin to the Monastery of Marmoutiers on the Loire, in the year 397. There were more than two thousand monks present who had been his disciples, besides a distinct choir of virgins and an innumerable multitude of devout people.

The body of the blessed St. Francis is placed in a vault under the Marble Chapel in the great Church at Assissi. It stands in an upright posture; but the vault having been shut up by Gregory IX. no one can enter to behold it. A small opening, however, is left, through which a person may look by the light of a lamp burning in it. In the convent

\* De Cura pro Mortuis. † Benedict. XIV. de Canonizatione Servorum Dei, lib. i.

‡ S. Hieronymi Vita S. Pauli Eremitæ.

|| Joan. Devoti Institut. Canon. lib. ii. lit. vii. § 1.

§ The Ancient Rites and Monuments of the Monastical and Cathedral Church of Durham, p. 89.

of the poor Clares at Assissi, in a vault under the high altar, lies the body of St. Clare, with a lamp burning before the opening into it. This was an ancient custom, as may be collected from the mode of episcopal burial in the thirteenth century, according to the description of the tomb of a bishop of Angers. "He was buried in the mitre in which he had been consecrated, his crosier was by his side, and on his breast was placed the chalice, and a lead paten, containing wine and bread, and in this instance, behind his head there was a kind of channel, in which were a lamp lighted with oil, so that when the sarcophagus was closed, the light of that burning lamp shone within upon the body through an opening."\*

Camden and Weever relate that, at the suppression and demolition of the abbeys in York, burning lamps were found in many tombs, the flame of which it was said could not be extinguished by wind or water.

This practice seems to have greatly struck the poetic imagination of the Minstrel, who has so grandly described the midnight opening of the grave of Michael Scott in Melrose Abbey.—

"Lo, warrior! now the cross of red  
Points to the grave of the mighty dead;  
Within it burns a wondrous light,  
To chase the spirits that love the night."

These are the monk's words to Sir William of Delorain. And when the grave-stone had been raised, we read of the lamp within the tomb, that

"No earthly flame blaz'd e'er so bright,  
It shone like Heaven's own blessed light,  
Show'd the monk's cowl, and visage pale,  
Danced on the dark-brow'd warrior's mail,  
And kiss'd his waving plume."

What follows is truly beautiful and solemn:—

"Before their eyes the wizard lay,  
As if he had not been dead a day.  
His hoary beard in silver roll'd,  
He seem'd some seventy winters old;  
A palmer's amice wrapp'd him round,  
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,  
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea,  
His left hand held his book of might;  
A silver cross was in his right;  
The lamp was placed beside his knee:  
High and majestic was his look,  
At which the fellest fiends had shook;  
And all unruffled was his face:  
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.  
And the priest pray'd fervently and loud:  
With eyes averted pray'd he;  
He might not endure the sight to see  
Of the man he had lov'd so brotherly."

In the grave of Charles of Trier, grand master of the Teutonic knights, were deposited, by his express orders, the life and prophecies of St. Brigitte. This was that just and great man, whose bitterest enemies

---

\* Guillelmi Majoris Episcopi Andegav. Gesta apud Dacher. Spicileg, tom. x.

could never charge him with a single fault.\* The extraordinary respect shown to many bishops at their death, forms a remarkable feature in history. St. Hugh, of Lincoln, the Burgundian, was carried to his grave at Lincoln by three kings. When St. Medard, Bishop of Noyon, died, the king, Clotaire, was present, and he assisted afterwards in person to carry the body to Soissons. And, as Don Savedra remarks, the dead body of that brave prelate, Gilles d'Albornos, passed from Rome to Toledo on the shoulders of the nations, as well friends as enemies.†

We may learn the form of collegiate burial from the account which is given of the customs that used to be observed in the English College at Douai. "At the burial of any of our members, the whole community attended in a very solemn procession from the College Church to that of the parish, where high mass was sung. The corpse was carried by the schoolfellows and companions of the deceased; a priest was borne on the shoulders of his fellow priests; and a dozen or twenty scholars surrounded the bier with lighted flambeaux. At the head of the procession went the priest, deacon, and subdeacon, vested for mass, with acolyths, thurifers, and our own choir, in surplices. The students followed, two and two, in the order of the classes, wearing cassocks."

The Roman ritual prescribes, that at the funeral of young persons, the bells should not be tolled in a lugubrious manner, but that they should rather be rung, so as to produce a festive sound.‡ This holy pomp of burial did not depend upon the rank of the deceased. In every country, during the middle ages, as in Spain or Portugal at the present day, the funerals of a poor tradesman or mechanic were, in their external form and appearance, often more splendid than those of potent peers or wealthy gentlemen. Though many of them could not even afford a coffin, yet their biers would be surrounded by a blaze of light streaming from hundreds of wax torches, each as thick as a man's arm—for all working men, as we have formerly shown, had enrolled themselves in a fraternity, and the expense on these occasions was always borne by the whole society.|| In the case of poor persons who had no such assistance, the Roman ritual requires that the priests of the parish should furnish tapers at their own expense, that so venerable a rite may never be omitted through any unworthy regard to economy.§

The work of corporal mercy, which consisted in burying the dead, used to be performed, as in Italy at the present day, by noblemen and persons of the highest condition, who, through devotion, used to form confraternities for that purpose. Spenser describes this custom—

"Others had charge of them now being dead,  
In seemely sort their corse to engrave,  
And deck with dainty flowres their brydall bed,  
That to their heavenly spouse both sweet and brave  
They might appeare, when he their soules shall save,  
The wondrous workmanship of God's own mould,  
Whose face he made all beastes to fear, and gave  
All in his hand, even dead we honour should."\*\*

With respect to the funerals of great nobles and kings, in the middle

\* Voigt, *Geschichte Preussens*, iv. 381.

† Christian Prince, ii. 559.

‡ De Exequiis Parvulorum.

|| Letters to Osorius.

§ De Exequiis.

\*\* Faery Queene, i. 10.



ages, if there was often a more magnificent pageant attending them, the pomp was still always ecclesiastic, and almost monastical, never secular or military. The Burning Chapel, so called from the quantity of lights which were placed round the body previous to interment; the ceremonial of sprinkling it with holy water; the vigils and prayers; the attendance of the clergy of all orders, both regular and secular; corresponded with the character of men, so many of whom expired on sack-cloth and ashes.

“King Charles V. of France, (says Christine de Pisan) was wondrously afflicted on the death of his queen; and although the virtue of constancy was greater in him than in most men, this departure caused him such grief, that never before or after did any event produce the same effect in him; for much they loved each other with great love. The king, who loved the body, thought of the soul by devout prayers, masses, vigils, and psalters, and great alms. The body was carried solemnly, according to the usage of kings and queens,—clothed, adorned, and crowned,—on a rich bed of cloth of gold, surmounted with a canopy; and thus it was conveyed in great procession to the Church of our Lady. Four hundred torches, each of six pounds of wax, burned there. Monks of all orders went before the body, and our princes walked after it, clothed in black.”\*

These sad pageants on the death of kings, were not without a high moral dignity, and a most salutary effect upon the minds of men. Poets discerned this, as when Martial d’Auvergne, in his Vigils, relates the death of Charles VII.; and, after describing the pomp of the funeral and the grief of all France, concludes thus:—

“Ainsi le regard de ce monde  
Après qu’on a euë grand liesse  
Tousjours en pleurs et deuil redonde,  
Et la joye finit en tristesse.”†

Weever, in the discourse prefixed to his great work, laments, in bitter terms, on grounds of social policy, the error and practice introduced after “the reformation,” which caused all the ceremonial rites of obsequies to be laid aside as a fruitless vanity; and he makes this remark, “that although the manner of burial and the pomp of obsequies be rather comforts to the living than helps to the dead: and although all these ceremonies be despised by our parents on their death-beds, yet should they not be neglected by us their children or nearest of kindred, upon their interments.”

As when the soul was departing, so also when the body was descending into the grave, the prayers of the Church employed the thoughts of the assistants. Unknown to the middle ages was that custom of the Athenians which has been revived in modern times by the infidels of France, of choosing some distinguished man of the city to pronounce a panegyric over the dead at their burial, *ἔπαινον τὸν πρέποντα*, as Thucydides styles it.‡ But instead of this vain parade of rhetoric,—

“The mass was sung, and prayers were said  
And solemn requiem for the dead;

\* Chap. l.

† Les Vigiles de la Mort du Roy Charles VII.

‡ Lib. ii. 34.

And bells told out their mighty peal  
For the departed spirit's weal."

The first Christians made a wail for their dead, as at the funeral of St. Stephen, of whom we read, "*Fecerunt planctum magnum super eum.*"\* Yet it became the custom, in a very early age of the Church, to suppress all public lamentations. St. Jerome testifies that at funerals it was usual to sing allelujah. In later times, however, it was found necessary to provide against a return to the ancient practice of the heathen mourners,—so prone are men at all times to succumb from the supernatural elevation of faith. The Pagan excessive wail for the dead was strictly forbidden by the canons, as may be seen in Burchard. "Nothing (say they) should be sung but psalms and prayers for the soul, and *kurie eleison.*" Among the interrogations on the visitation of a bishop in the tenth century, we read, "Whether any one has sung over a dead man in the night diabolic songs, or drank or eat, or seemed to rejoice at his death, or if dead bodies were kept with nocturnal vigils in any other place besides the church?" By a synod in that century, the clergy are commanded to forbid such customs, and all laughter over the dead. "Laics, (say the canons) who observe funeral vigils, should do it with fear and trembling and reverence. No one there should presume to sing diabolic songs, or to dance, or make jests, which the Pagans learned to practise from the devil. For who does not perceive that it is diabolic, not only alien from the Christian religion, but even contrary to human nature, there to sing, rejoice, get drunk, and be dissolved in laughter, laying aside all piety and affection of charity, as if rejoicing at a brother's death, where grief and lamentation with weeping ought to resound for the loss of a dear brother. Therefore, such insane joy and pestiferous singing must be altogether prohibited on the authority of God. But if any one desires to sing, let him sing *kurie eleison*, otherwise let him keep silence."

When the moderns take notice of any particular abuse connected with religion existing in society at present, they confidently ascribe it to the spirit of the middle ages. But with a very little knowledge of history it is easy to discern the error of such an opinion. Religion, during the middle ages, was engaged in an incessant struggle to abolish the corruptions which had existed before its arrival: and perhaps there is evidence to prove, that even in the tenth century there was a more delicate sense of what was, or was not, in unison with the spirit of Christianity and the mysteries of faith, and in consequence of the greater power of the Church to correct evils, a much more correct and effective discipline than can be found at present.

Reader! more lines I will not waste in setting forth the form of funeral rites—for other subjects so thicken upon us, that on this I cannot longer dwell. We have seen the dead man committed to the earth, with the ceremonies which were attached to his office and condition. "No more his bed he leaves ere the last angel-trumpet blow." We may conclude in the style of Homer—Thus did they bury the hero and the saint.

---

\* Acts viii. 2.

## CHAPTER VIII.

RETURNING now from the sad spectacle of the natural side of death, let us see what the history of the middle ages records respecting the comfort which was reserved for these mourners in the great mysteries of our holy religion.

We have seen the character which death assumed during the ages of faith, attending the sufferer from sickness to the grave, where, on mere natural grounds, it would have been reasonable to suppose that all offices respecting him were terminated, and all the duties of the survivors fulfilled, whose lips his name, however once cherished and familiar, was never again to pass. Thus it was in the ancient world amidst the darkness and gloom of the night of heathenism, when, as Pliny says, "men loved, or rather pretended to love, only the living, and did not even pretend to love any but those who were prosperous: for both the wretched and the dead were alike forgotten."\* A man of extraordinary genius and renown like Cicero, indeed, might vainly flatter himself with the thought of the fame which awaited him, and say, in allusion to his death, "*Longum illud tempus quum non ero, magis me movet, quam hoc exiguum.*" But this boast only rendered him obnoxious to the reproof which the same philosopher had passed upon others, saying, "*Quoniam hæc plausibilia non sunt, ut in sinu gaudeant, gloriosè loqui desinant.*"† This was, in truth, a delusion too palpable to impart consolation to any heart. The fact was no less stubborn because sung in immortal verse by poets, that when any one died, all the benevolence of men, as Stesichorus said, perished,

*θανόντος ἀνδρὸς πᾶσ' ὄλλυτ' ἀνδρώπων χάρις.*

"Time will abate thy grief," says Alcestis, about to die, to her husband: "the dead are nothing:" or, as the later poet expressed it,

"When we die, we are only ashes and a shade."‡

But were not those who still continued to divide time by calends in possession of some comfort after the death of friends? Yes, as the son of Nestor says, "This was the privilege of mourning mortals, to cut off the hair and to stain the cheek with tears."||

To persons at all conversant with Christian history, one need scarcely observe that the idea of death, in the mind of those who were its witnesses, had undergone a change no less complete than that which affected the sentiments of those who experienced it themselves. The moderns, indeed, seduced by the ravings of an ignorant fanaticism, and originally encouraged to attend to them by the artful policy of flagitious potentates, who thirsted for the plunder of property that had been consecrated to sacred purposes, were so unhappy as to renounce the faith of the holy catholic church, in respect to the assistance of the dead and the consolation of those who mourned for them. To avaricious and insensible hearts it was a delightful prospect which opened, when it was

\* Epist. lib. ix. 9.

† Tuscul. iii. 51.

‡ Hor. Carm. iv. 7.

|| Od. iv.



announced that paternal inheritances were no longer to bring with them the incumbrance of solemn rites, "*est sine sacris hæreditas.*"

In recording the work of destruction which followed the adoption of the new opinions, the Protestant historians supply abundant evidence of the pious solicitude with which men in ages of faith had provided for the relief of those who had risen from flesh to spirit, and for the consolation and advantage of their posterity. The mouldering ruins of those chantries and holy chapels, which give such an interest to our woods and mountains, still attest it, and the solemn language of the statutes preserved in such institutions as were suffered to remain under an altered form, still supplies an exercise for the ingenious facility with which, according to the new moral philosophy, men can escape from the obligation of accomplishing their vow.

From the birth of Christianity prayer for the dead was observed as a divine tradition and a deposit of faith. Miles, the Protestant Oxford editor of the works of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, acknowledged the fact in these words: "It is most true that the prayer and offering for the dead prevailed in the church from the time of the apostles." That anniversary prayers for the dead were observed, appears from Tertullian.\* By the conclusion which St. Perpetua was led to draw from her two visions, it is clear that the church in that early age believed the doctrine of the expiation of certain sins after death, and that she prayed for the faithful departed. We see too, that the parents of St. Agnes used to watch by night at her sepulchre. St. Augustin, after remarking that in the Book of Maccabees it is read, that sacrifice was offered for the dead, adds, "But if this had not been read in the ancient scriptures, it is not a little matter that the authority of the universal church is conspicuous in this custom, where the commendation of the dead occurs in the prayers of the priest which are offered at the altar of God."† St. Ambrose says, "that the faithful ought not so much to deplore the souls of the departed, as to accompany them with their prayers, that they ought not to draw an argument for tears, but a subject for recommendation to the Lord;"‡ and St. Chrysostom says, "that they should assist the dead, not with lamentations but with prayers, supplications, and alms."§ St. Augustin says of his deceased mother, "She did not command us to provide aromatics for her dead body, an especial monument, an ancestral tomb; but she only desired that she might be had in memory at thy altar, O God, whence she knew that Holy Victim was dispensed, by means of which the handwriting that was against us has been destroyed. Inspire thy servants, O Lord, that as many as read this may remember thy servant Monica with her husband Patricius at thy altar."§ This was to provide against that purifying trial which may follow death, and against that day of which the prophets spoke, when the Lord should wash away the filth of the sons and daughters of Sion, and obliterate the blood from the midst of them with the spirit of judgment and with the spirit of burning, when he should sit burning and purifying as if gold and silver, and should cleanse the sons of

\* Lib. de Monogamia. Id. de Corona Militis, cap. 3.

† De Cura pro Mortuis.

‡ Hom. xli. in Epist. i. ad Corinth.

§ Ad Faustin. ii. Epist. 8.

§ Confess. lib. xix. cap. 13.

Levi, and melt them as gold and silver, when the sacrifice of Juda and Jerusalem should be pleasing to him as in the primitive days.\* The fervour and charity of the middle ages appear in nothing more conspicuous than in the zeal of men to assist their departed friends. Many of the epistles in the collection of those of St. Boniface, are occupied in transmitting, or in requiring the names of priests and laymen deceased, that they may be commemorated at the altar. The friendship of the holy men, whom missionary zeal had scattered through distant regions, finds only one consolation in the thought that they are always united both in life and death in the heart of Jesus. Thus Doto writes as follows to the Bishop Lullo: "*quamvis terrarum longitudine separati videmur, tamen et terrarum longinquitas non dividit mente, quos charitas divina conjunxit in corde.*"† On this principle they might have used the words of Pindar, expressing their belief that the dead take an interest in the fortune of their surviving relations on earth.

Καταχρύπτει δ' οὐ κόνις  
Συγγόνων κεδνὰν χάριν.‡

The celebration of the memory of the dead on the third, seventh, thirtieth, and anniversary day, is a most ancient institution, as appears from St. Augustin and other fathers. Amalarius and Alcuin explain the mystic reason of these days as follows: "the third day after the obit," say they, "is celebrated to express our trust in the future resurrection, from the memory of our Saviour's rising on the third day; the seventh day expresses a general number or a totality, on which we pray that all their sins may be forgiven." "Luctus mortui Septem dies," says the Scripture;|| and thus the sons of Jacob celebrated the obsequies of their father during seven days;§ or because the seventh day is the sabbath, we pray the Lord of the sabbath to give them eternal rest. The thirtieth day is observed in conformity to the venerable examples of the Old Testament, as when the children of Israel wept for Aaron during the space of thirty days, and when Moses died they wept for him thirty days in the plains of Moab. And the anniversary is repeated, that in the event of their being still exposed to the purifying flames, they may be assisted by the suffrages of the faithful, for much it avails them, there to be the object of the prayers of such

——— " Whose wills  
Have root of goodness in them."\*\*

Cardinal Bona, speaking of the office of the dead, says, "that it was by an especial Providence that learned men, from the very age of the apostles, employed themselves in describing the received rites of the church, because the Holy Spirit foresaw that heresy in the latter ages would attempt to pervert and confound all things."†† The office of the dead begins absolutely without an invocation of the divine assistance, or glorification of the most holy Trinity, or benediction, or any rite indicating joy, "in order," as Amalarius says, "to correspond with what

\* S. Augustini de Civit. Dei, lib. xx. c. 25.

† Olymp. lib. vii.

\*\* Dante, Purg. xi.

|| Eccles. 22. 13.

†† De Divina Psalmody. p. 271.

‡ Bonifacii Epist. lxxxiv.

§ Genes. i. 10.

took place at the death of our Lord." Cardinal Bona observes, "that generally when we pray for the dead, we are reminded of our own end; they are dead and we are also to die, they yesterday, we to-morrow."\* What an advantage, then, had the pious charity of our ancestors provided for the living also in their foundations for the spiritual wants of the dead? "*Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis.*"

The anniversaries of kings were celebrated in Gaul in a very early age. Celebrated were those of Clovis, in the church of St. Peter, now of St. Geneviève, that of his son Childebert, in the monastery of St. Vincent, now of St. Germain des Près, and that of Dagobert, in the church of St. Denis, of which there was no monument to trace the beginning.† In the sacristy of the cathedral of Ravenna, I saw several very ancient inscriptions in stone, to commemorate the obligation of the canons, to celebrate a solemn mass of requiem on certain anniversaries, which it was the object of these inscriptions to specify. Luther of Brunswick, grand master of the Teutonic order, in his last illness desired himself to be removed to Königsberg, in order to make his devout prayer in the cathedral which he had lately assisted to erect. He gave orders that he should be buried in the midst of the choir, and that over his grave a light should for ever burn, for maintaining which he left funds, and that a dole and a feast should be always made on the anniversary of his death, when a solemn requiem should be sung. 'This was "the pure and wise master," as he was styled, "the poet, the just man, the mild ruler, the devout friend of the monks and of the poor."‡ Suger composed lessons for matins recording the virtues of Louis-le-Gros, which were read in churches where his anniversary was celebrated. It became a general custom to found and erect chapels, and sometimes even monasteries, on fields of battle, where prayer should be constantly offered up for the souls of the slain. Battle Abbey, in Sussex, was a celebrated instance, and in Switzerland, the chapels of Mortgarten and Morat have been visited by most travellers in that country. After the great battle at Rudau, in 1370, the Teutonic knights erected three chapels in which masses and vigils were to be performed for the souls of the fallen; two were on the banks of the Rudau, and the third on the Laptau, and on the spot where the heroic marshal fell, the grand-master placed a vast monument, on which the names of the heroes were inscribed.|| The poor gained nothing by the abolition of these anniversaries consequent on the setting up of a new religion. King Edward I., when he founded obits for his queen Eleanor, in Westminster Abbey, provided also that money should be given to the poor that came to the solemnization of the same. King Henry V. founded perpetually one day every week, a dirge with nine lessons, and a mass to be celebrated in the same abbey church, for the soul of King Richard the Second, and he appointed that on each of these days six shillings and eightpence should be given to the poor people, and on his anniversary, that twenty pounds in pence should be distributed to the most needful. These solemn anniversaries, like that of the great baron, mentioned by Dante, as he whose name and worth the festival of Thomas still reveres, be-

\* De Divina Psalmod. p. 265.

† Mabillon Præfat. in iii. Sæcul. Benedict. § 6.

‡ Voigt Geschichte Preussens, iv. 512.

|| Id. v. 220.



cause commemorated on that day,\* were the means of multiplying those sublime and consoling offices of religion, in which men experienced the purest delight, as well as the most salutary impressions; for of them we may say with truth, "*Hæc sunt solatia, hæc fomenta summorum dolorum.*" Then it was that they were led to meditate on—

"That day of wrath, that dreadful day,  
When heaven and earth shall pass away;"

to consider within their hearts

"What power shall be the sinner's stay?  
How shall he meet that dreadful day?  
When shrivelling like a parched scroll,  
The flaming heavens together roll;  
When louder yet, and yet more dread,  
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead;"

and to pray devoutly, in silence weeping,

"Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,  
When man to judgment wakes from clay,  
Be thou the trembling sinner's stay,  
Though heaven and earth shall pass away!"

And what did the church teach the while, respecting the efficacy of these suffrages in behalf of the dead? You may learn this from the canons of the church in Ireland, which were passed in about the eighth century. The Synod says, "In four modes does the church offer for the souls of the dead. For the greatly good, they are thanksgivings in whom the oblation hath nothing to obliterate; for the greatly sinful, they are consolations to the living; for those who were not greatly good, they conduce to their obtaining full remission; and for those who were not greatly sinful, to their pains being rendered more tolerable."† This was conformable to the words of St. Augustin; "For some men after their death, the prayers of the church or of pious people are heard; but it is for those, who after their baptism, neither lived so ill as to be judged unworthy of such mercy, nor yet so well as not to need such mercy."‡ Besides these anniversaries and the solemn season, which was expressly devoted by the church for the discharge of this sacred duty, there were innumerable occasions on which it was usual in the middle ages to apply to it. "The church," says St. Augustin, "as a faithful mother, prays for all her children departed, that they who left no parents or friends may still have the benefit of suffrage."§ In many countries, as in France, it was the custom for "*le Clocheteur des Trépassés*" to go about the streets at night with a bell, chanting out in a solemn tone,

"Réveillez-vous, gens qui dormez,  
Priez Dieu pour les Trépassés."

Marchangy says, "that, in some provinces, funds used to be left by will to churches for the purpose of keeping up a cry, every Monday at one o'clock after midnight, to the sound of two bells for the commemo-

\* Parad. xvi.

† Capitula Selecta Canonum Hibernens. ex libro xv. cap. ii. apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. ix.

‡ De Civitate Dei, lib. xxi. cap. 24.

§ De Cura pro Mortuis:

ration of the dead." It used also to be a pious custom on board passage boats, as we still find in those which take passengers from Naples to Sorrento, and in many others which ply upon the rivers of the north of Italy, to ask a subscription for masses for the souls in purgatory.

As a conclusion to this chapter, let us hear the affecting words in which Ælred, Abbot of Rivaux, speaks of his love for a departed friend, who, as he says, "had admitted him to his friendship from the very commencement of his conversion to a religious life." With this passage the first book of his *Speculum Charitatis* ends, and it is highly worthy of our attention in this place, as revealing the thoughts and minds of men during the ages of faith, with respect to the mourning of surviving friends, and to the reasons of the duty which devolved upon them to pray earnestly for the departed soul. "Certainly," he exclaims, "as far as my eyes can discern, O Lord, there was nothing in thy servant which could be an impediment to him in passing to thy embraces; but no man knows what is within man unless the spirit of man which is in him; whereas thy eye, O Lord, penetrates to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart; and as a certain worthy servant said, '*Væ etiam laudabili vitæ hominum, si remota pietate discutiatur.*' Behold then, O Lord, the source of my fear and of my tears. Attend to them, O thou most sweet and merciful Saviour! Receive them, O thou my only hope, my one and only refuge, my God! Receive, O Lord, the sacrifices which I offer to thee for my beloved friend, and whatever stains may remain in him, either pardon or impute them to me. Strike me: on me let thy anger fall; only hide not thy blessed face from him; withdraw not thy sweetness from him. O my Lord, let him experience the consolations of thy mercy, which he so earnestly desired, in which he so securely confided, to which he commended himself with such sweet vehemence, during that night when, after the other brethren had withdrawn, and one only was left to watch by him, he was heard to break forth with those repeated words, '*Misericordiam, misericordiam, misericordiam!*' He was endeavoring," as they say, "to sing the whole of that verse, '*Misericordiam et judicium cantabo tibi, Domine;*' but recalled by the sweetness of that first word, he could proceed no farther, and so rested in the repetition; and when he saw the brother, who sat by his bed, not appearing to be equally impressed with a sense of its sweetness, he caught his hand, and, pressing it with earnest emotion, repeated again, '*Misericordiam, misericordiam.*' That soul seems to have been dissolved in ineffable joy at the thought of such grace, feeling that its sins were absorbed in this immense ocean of divine mercy, so that nothing was left to oppress or terrify the conscience. As for me, I will follow thee with my tears, with my prayers, with the sacrifice of our Mediator. And do thou, O Father Abraham, extend thy arms again and again to receive this poor one of Christ, this other Lazarus, receiving and cherishing him as he returns from the miseries of this life; and to me also, who so loved him, grant a place of rest along with him in thy bosom."

## CHAPTER IX.

WHEN Ulysses was conducting Neoptolemus to Troy, the vessel passed within sight of the tomb of the great Æacides, and in the painting which Quintus Calaber gives of this voyage, there is an admirable stroke of nature, truly Homeric, in reference to it:

Τοῖσι δ' ἄρ' Ἰδαίων ὀρέων φαίνοντο κόλωναί,  
 Χρύσα τε, καὶ Σμίνδειον ἔδος, καὶ Σίγιας ἄκρη.  
 Τύμβος τ' Αἰακίδαο δαΐφρονος· ἀλλὰ μιν οὐτι  
 Τίδς Δαέρταο πυκαφρονέων ἐνὶ θυμῷ  
 Δεῖξε Νεοπτολέμφ, ὅνα οἱ μὴ πένθος ἀέξῃ  
 Θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι.\*

In the ages of faith, as well as in more ancient days, it was a work of humanity and of religion, in which mourners found a sweet delight, to commemorate the dead even by a material monument. It was a Catholic as well as a Homeric practice, by means of sepulchres, to remind the living of the shortness and uncertainty of human life, to raise a mound or a symbol upon the spot on which the brave or good had fallen, to pile up a tomb upon the shore of the wild sea,

ἄνδρὸς δυστήνοιο, καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι.†

Euripides says, "that the traveller, as he passes by the tomb of Alcestis, will thither bend his devious way, with reverence gaze, and with a sigh smite on his breast." And in the early and middle ages of Christian history, to behold a sepulchre, and to supplicate God over a particular grave, would be the object of long and painful journeys.

Who knows not the sublime and wondrous event which of itself has served to designate a long period of the ages which we are attempting to illustrate? Who has not continually on his tongue the ages of the crusades; the ages in which men renounced their homes, their country, their friends, engaged in all the horrors of a long and perilous navigation, exposed themselves to the dangers of an Asiatic and pestilential climate, willingly rushed forward to encounter death in every form and circumstance that could render it painful, and all this for a tomb?

In such an age it was natural that the spirit of mourning should have developed itself in every gracious and solemn form that harmonized with the genius of love and memory, that it should have perpetuated, by material monuments on this earth, some traces of the affection of children, and of parents, and of friends, that it should have multiplied those sepulchres which relate the untimely departure of heroic worth, which exhibit the overflowings of youthful sorrow, or the calm and brief expressions of experienced wisdom, tombs which recall the images of youth, and beauty, and goodness,

—— "at sight wherof  
 Tears often stream forth, by remembrance wak'd,  
 Whose sacred stings the piteous only feel."‡

\* Od. vii. 401.

† Od. xi. 76.

‡ Dant. Purg. xii.



Alban Butler remarks, "that the primitive Christians were solicitous not to bury their dead among the infidels, as appears from Gamaliel's care in this respect, mentioned by Lucian in his account of the discovery of St. Stephen's relics, as also from St. Cyprian, who makes it a crime in Martialis, a Spanish bishop, to have buried Christians in profane sepulchres."\* To be buried near the holy martyrs was a great object of their desire; this was the wish of St. Ambrose in dying, for which S. Maximus assigns the following reason: "*Hoc à majoribus provisum est, ut sanctorum ossibus nostra corpora sociemus, ut dum illos tartarus metuit, nos pœna non tangat.*" In the cemetery of St. Calixtus, pope and martyr, on the Appian way, were buried more than one hundred and seventy-four thousand martyrs and forty-six popes. With what awe, with what unutterable reverence did I descend into the catacombs of St. Calixtus, of St. Cyriacus, and of St. Marcellinus, preceded by the friar holding the small taper, which every moment seemed about to be extinguished by a sudden blast from some fresh passage among the sombre vaults! Here I was told St. Lucia laid the body of St. Sebastian: there was found the body of St. Cecilia; further on was discovered the body of the holy martyr Maximus; on this side lay a pope, on that several children. O what a solemn and religious place! and how it fills the soul with emotions indescribable of joy and sorrow; one might call it Pausilypus, *παύσις τῆς λύπης*, the end of grief. Truly here death hath no sting: the grave no victory. One would wish to lie down here in peace, that one's soul might follow whither these are already gone. "*Hospites fuerunt super terram et ego: tanquam umbra subito transierunt et ego.*" Into the catacombs of St. Calixtus one descends from the Basilica of St. Sebastian, and on the wall near the entrance there is an inscription on stone, containing the account which St. Jerome gives of this very spot: "When I was a boy studying at Rome," says the holy doctor, "I used, with other companions of my age and inclination, to go about diligently every Sunday, amidst the sepulchres of the apostles and martyrs, in the crypts which are excavated in the depth of the earth, having the bodies of the dead on both sides for walls, and where all things are so obscure, that one might say the prophetic word was fulfilled, '*Descendant ad infernum viventes.*' The scanty light, at rare intervals admitted from above, only tempers the horror of the darkness, and serves to deepen the black night which succeeds to it. One is reminded of that Virgilian line,

"Horror ubique animos, simul ipsa silentia terrent."†

In early times, none but martyrs, bishops, and abbots, were allowed to be buried within the church. No title of nobility conferred this privilege, and no money was required for burial, but oblations were received and even enjoined by many kings.

The Roman ritual, however, requires that the poor should be buried wholly gratis. The exclusion of heretics, and of such as died deprived of ecclesiastical peace, was a primitive discipline which was never renounced. Thus at Ravenna, the sepulchres of the Arian Goths, and of the ministers of King Theodoric, were removed out of the churches, as soon as the Catholics regained possession of them; and many of these

\* S. Cypriani Epist. 68.

† S. Hieronymi in Ezech. Com. cap. 40.

are now arranged in a museum within the archiepiscopal palace. At the same time it may be well to remark how religion, in the middle ages, guarded men from contracting any superstitious opinion of the importance of burial in holy ground, and from that error which led so many poets of antiquity to describe the sepulchre as a place of rest for the body, within which the dead man reposed; as in these verses which Cicero ridicules:—

“Neque sepulcrum, quo recipiat, habeat, portum corporis;  
Ubi, remissâ humanâ vitâ, corpus requiescat malis.”

“Is it an injury to the just if they be not buried in the cemetery of the church?” is a question that occurs in a work ascribed to St. Anselm; to which the answer was made, “By no means: for the whole world is the temple of God, which is consecrated by the blood of Christ; and therefore, whether they be cast out, or buried in the field, or in the wood, or in the marsh, or in what place soever, they are always preserved within the bosom of the Church, which is spread over the whole earth. Is it of advantage to the just to be buried in holy places? Places become sacred in which just men are buried; but to those who suffer it is of advantage, because when their friends meet there, they are reminded by their monuments to offer up prayers to God for them. Is it of any service to the wicked to be buried in a holy place? Nay, it is rather an injury to be associated in sepulture with those from whom they are far separated in merit.”\*

All this had been shown by St. Augustin in answer to Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, who had consulted him on being entreated by a certain widow, who desired that the dead body of her son, a faithful youth, might be buried in the Basilica of the blessed Confessor Felix. “The devotion of the mother to the martyr,” says St. Augustine, “is itself a supplication in behalf of her son, and, therefore, it may be to his advantage to be interred in that Basilica: *adjuvat defuncti spiritum, non mortui corporis locus, sed ex loci memoria vivus matris affectus*. It seems to me, that the only advantage to the dead in being buried near the martyrs is, that by commending them to the patronage of martyrs, the ardour of that supplication for them is increased.”†

At first, indeed, even the bishops, saints, and martyrs, were buried near the church; “*juxta ecclesiam*,” as Bede says, of St. Augustin’s body. This was in the front court, the *Paradisus Ecclesiæ*, as at Rome; or in France, *Ecclesiæ Parvisium*. The ancient canons forbid any one to be buried within the church itself.‡ Thus before many of the churches of Ravenna, as at the cathedral and before the Basilica of St. John the Baptist, stand vast sarcophaguses, in which great personages were buried, before it was permitted to entomb any one within the church. Those in the Basilica of St. Apollinare, in Classe, containing the ashes of the early archbishops, have been placed within during later ages, for originally they stood without. Thus still is placed at St. Vitale the sepulchre of Isaac, Exarch of Ravenna, that illustrious Armenian who commanded armies in the East and in the West, and whose glory,

\* S. Anselmi *Elucidarii*, lib. ii. cap. 31.

† De Cura pro Mortuis.

‡ Thomassinus de Vet. et Nova Ecclesiæ Disciplin. pars iii. lib. i. c. 68.

as the epitaph pompously sets forth, reached from the rising to the setting sun!

Constantine was buried in the porch of the Apostles at Constantinople; Honorius in the porch of St. Peter at Rome; St. Augustin, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, was interred in the porch of St. Peter and St. Paul, which was a church of his foundation near Canterbury, and together with him, six other archbishops who next succeeded him, whose relics were afterwards removed into the Abbey Church.

In the fourth century, bishops were buried within the church; though, for a long time after, only bishops, abbots, holy priests, and laics of the utmost sanctity, were allowed to be buried in churches.\* By degrees, however, this salutary discipline was broken through, and persons of all ranks, without regard to spiritual qualifications, were admitted to be buried within the church; the only distinction required being, that laymen should be placed with their feet towards the altar, while ecclesiastics should have their heads next it, as if fronting the people. Still the memory of the former discipline prevailed, so far as sometimes to induce great princes, through humility, and as an expression of penitence, to command that their bodies should be interred without the walls. An instance of this occurs in the history of Suger; for we read, that when he proposed to rebuild the Abbey Church of St. Denis, the entrance was obstructed by a great massive porch, which concealed the portal. This had been built by Charlemagne from a pious motive. Pepin his father was buried under that spot, not laid on his back, like other dead men, but prostrate, with his face against the ground, in order to denote, as he had said, that he wished to make amends for the excesses committed by his father, Charles Martel. Charlemagne, not enduring that his father should lie buried without the church, had built this huge porch, that by this contrivance he might be within it. Suger, however, had the body removed to another place, and the porch destroyed.†

The Church in several synods, proposed to restore the ancient discipline respecting sepulchres, and strong measures were enforced to correct the abuses which time and the pride of family had introduced. In the Council of Rheims, in the year 1583, it was decreed that no tombs should be erected higher than the ground, and that no statues, or military standards, or trophies, should be placed upon them, and that the dead were only to be praised in becoming language. "*Quæ ad pietatem et preces pro mortuis faciendas spectent potius, quam defunctorum enarandis laudibus insumantur.*"‡ By the Council of Tholouse, in the year 1590, no inscriptions or emblems were to be placed in the church but such as were approved of by the bishop or archdeacon.§ The occasion of these statutes was the Pagan taste, which had begun to affect even the ancient style of sepulchral architecture.

The tomb of the Scipios was carved in marble, and adorned with works of art; but the sepulchres of the martyrs were rude and solemn. In the catacombs, the inscriptions and emblems over the Christian graves are very simple—such as, "The holy martyr, Maximus."—"In pace Hipolitus, amator pauperum."—"Gregoria in pace." Sometimes there

\* Durandus Rationale, lib. i. cap. 5. † Hist. de Suger, lib. iv. ‡ Can. de Sepult.

§ Thomassinus de Vet. et Nova Ecclesiæ Disciplin. pars iii. lib. i. cap. 68.



is an iron grating to preserve the slab, on which some saint has slept, from being worn away by the devout kisses of the faithful. In the cloisters of St. Paul, in those of St. Lorenzo and of St. Agnes extra muros, and in the porch of St. Maria in Trastevere, as also in one gallery in the Vatican, you see the simple inscriptions which used to be placed over the martyrs; for these slabs have been removed from the catacombs, where they covered the apertures of the recesses in which the bodies lay. The emblems, which are in general but rudely carved, are very numerous. You see a bird with a branch in its bill,—a heart,—crossed palms;—a ship in full sail near a tower, on the top of which is a flame;—a man holding out his arms extended in prayer;—a boy riding on a dolphin;—a barrel, and the monogram of Christ;—a man preaching from a pulpit, and a bird bringing to him a branch;—an anchor;—two birds about to drink from a chalice;—one bird feeding another;—a fish, a lion, a leopard, wheels, hatchets, crooks and spears. The interest inspired by such monuments must of course greatly exceed what can be generally experienced. But although we cannot expect to feel similar emotions from beholding the tombs of a later date, there is still, in those of the middle ages, a majestic simplicity, a most venerable air of holiness, which is enough to startle, and reduce to silent awe, the curious observer of our days. In the first place, the words inscribed upon them are generally full of sublimity. The heathen sepulchral inscriptions preserved in the gallery of the Vatican, are very minute in specifying the exact age and the abundant merits of the person, who as on the modern tombs, in countries that have abandoned the ancient creed, is always shown to have been “bene meritus.” Nothing, however, in ancient times, bore resemblance to the vanity and bombast of the modern epitaphs, of which that on Sir Philip Sidney in St. Paul’s, beginning, “England, Netherland, the heavens and the arts,” may be assumed as the perfect model. This was not the style adopted in ages of faith. The tomb of Suger, in the abbey of St. Denis, consisted of a simple stone, raised about three feet high, on which these four words were inscribed—“Cy gist l’abbé Suger,”—which gives occasion to Mabillon to remark how much nobler was the style of inscriptions in the middle ages, than that, so full of pompous affectation, which had begun to introduce itself in his time.\*

The epitaph in brass on the Black Prince, in the cathedral of Canterbury, was this,—“Here lieth the noble Prince, Edward, the eldest son of the thrice-noble King Edward the Third, who died on the feast of the Trinity, in the year of grace, 1376: to the soul of whom, God grant mercy. Amen.”

How impressive are those old English inscriptions given by Weever, like that at Minster in Shepey:—“In the most holy name of Jesu, pray for the sowl of John and Margaret:”—or those in Stone Church: “O merciful Jesew, have mercy on the sowl of Sir John Dew. Sweet Jesew, grant to William and Anne and us, everlastyng lyff. Pray yow hertely for charitie. Say a Pater Noster and an Ave.”

Thomas Brenton, Bishop of Rochester, confessor to King Richard II. who travelled into many places beyond seas, and preached at Rome be-

---

\* De Studiis Monast. pars ii. cap. 12.

fore the Pope, being famous for his learning and rare endowments, was buried at Seale, under a marble stone, on which was his portraiture, and only these words were inscribed:—"Credo quod Redemptor meus vivit;" and these figures, 1389.

On the tomb of Sir John Lumbard, priest, in Stone Church, were certain Latin rhymes, beseeching whoever passed by, whether he were a grown man or only a boy, to pray that his soul might find mercy. In the north cloister of St. Paul's Cathedral, a grave-stone without a name had only this inscription: "*Vixi, peccavi, penitui, naturæ cessi.*" In the Temple Church was an inscription, imploring prayer for the soul of Richard Wye, and only these lines added:—"Domine, secundum delictum meum noli me judicare. Deprecor Majestatem tuam ut tu deleas iniquitatem meam." The epitaph on King Edward the Confessor, in Westminster Abbey, consists of these three hexameters:—

Omnibus insignis virtutum laudibus Heros,  
Sanctus Edwardus Confessor, Rex venerandus;  
Quinto die Jani moriens super Ethera scandit.  
Sursum corda. Moritur Ann. Dom. 1065."

The only words upon the tomb of that potent noble, William Bourchier, Earl of Eu, in Normandy, which was in the Church of Little Easton, were these:—"Fili Dei, miserere mei; mater Dei, miserere mei." At Boston was a fair tomb, whereon were engraven in brass the names of John Deynes and Catherine his wife, and these two words only added, "Respice, Respice!"—an allusion probably to the prayer of the Passion, which begins with these words.

The sepulchral inscriptions upon the religious, and on certain young students, in the Abbey of St. Alban, made by the Abbot Whethamsted, were of such interest and beauty in the estimation of Weever, that, although the brasses containing them had been plundered from the grave-stones, he yet inscribed them in his book, having collected them from the manuscript of the abbey. In Catholic countries, which have never witnessed the barbarous rage against the dead, their monuments should be objects of minute attention, and they will often repay it. I observed a very ancient sepulchral slab in the pavement of the old Cathedral of Ravenna, to commemorate Gregorius. There was no date or other notice, but only the figure of a cross, and written under it, in very ancient characters, "*O Crux sancta, adjuva nos.*" In the same church Gerardus, archbishop, who died in the year of our Lord 113, was commemorated by a simple leaden tablet. In the cathedral of Sienna I remarked on the pavement a tomb slab, representing a bishop holding clasped in both hands a book open, in which was written, "*Firmiter credimus, simpliciter confitemur.*" There was no name or date or other words. In the cloisters of the Abbey of Fontenelle may still be seen many sepulchral stones, very small and humble, with no other ornament but a little Greek cross and a simple tear under it. There is no name engraved, but only the day, month, and year of the departure.—It was well for a poet or a philosopher when it devolved on monks to compose the inscriptions for his tomb. What pilgrim, who has visited Rome, has not been induced to ascend that toilsome hill on which stands the humble convent of St. Onufrio? Within the court are two orange trees of great height, reaching above the cloistered arches, and even overshadow-

owing the windows in the upper stage. In the church, at the left hand of the western door, on entering, is a small slab, on which you read these words:—"The bones of Torquato Tasso lie here. Lest the stranger should not know the spot, the brethren have marked it with this stone." Did not the poor Hieronymites know how to write the poet's epitaph?

In the middle ages, as in Italy and other Catholic countries at the present day, there was often, in sepulchral inscriptions, a kind of struggle indicated between humility and the desire of edifying the living, by attesting some peculiar trait in the character of the dead. Thus I have frequently observed some testimony of this kind: on one it would be, "Pious towards God;" on another, "A lover of the Poor;" on another, "Devout in the care of Temples." Men had not to compose epitaphs for persons like Timocreon of Rhodes, on whose tombs a sentence of piety would sound like a satire, or the anticipation of God's judgment. On the tomb of Lodovico de Bellomonte, Bishop of Durham, who lay buried before the high altar in that church, were engraven in brass certain divine and celestial sayings of the holy Scriptures, which he used peculiarly to select for his spiritual consolation.\*

In the Campo Santo at Pisa is a tomb associated with many historical recollections of saintly interest, on which the inscription, if not in the best style of Latinity, at least presents a singular contrast to the style of those Pagan epitaphs with which it is surrounded, being preserved there as relics of art. On this tomb, which contained the ashes of the mother of the Countess Matilda, we read—

*"Quamvis peccatrix sum Domina vocata Beatrix  
In tumulo missa jaceo quæ Comitissa."*

Indeed, to examine the sepulchres of the middle ages, which yet remain, forms one of the most interesting employments for the leisure of a philosophic traveller, who, like Pausanias, after traversing Greece, may find it well to occupy one-half of his relation with the description of tombs. Where does he feel deeper emotion than, for example, on entering the cathedral of Salerno, to behold the sepulchre of that sublime and illustrious saint, Pope Gregory VII., who died there a fugitive, repeating these words with his last breath—"Dilexi justitiam et odivi iniquitatem; propterea morior in exilio." With what a sweet melancholy does one wander through the cloisters of the great monastery adjoining the Basilica of St. Anthony at Padua, or pass before the numerous chapels in that vast church, reading, as one walks, the inscriptions over the learned, or the saintly or heroic dead! What a testimony do they furnish to the spirit and manners of Catholic times! Some commemorate the warrior who united letters and philosophy with arms; who, in his life time, many a noble act achieved, both by his wisdom and his sword. Such are the tombs of Stephen de Ripa, of the Ubal dini family, and of Ascanio Zabarella; others, the holy and profoundly learned monk, who, after a long course of public teaching of theology in that ancient university, departed to the source of truth. These are chiefly to friars of the seraphic order of St. Francis, who are represented

---

\* The Ancient Rites and Monuments of Durham, p. 25.



teaching on their sepulchres. Others, again, as that tomb of the Polish knight, Adamus Zalinsky, record the studious, chaste, and valiant traveller, who had seen Africa and Asia, and who had resolved upon visiting Jerusalem, when death constrained him to leave here his toil-worn limbs. On one sepulchre, as on that of Andrew Arcolus, you are told of the mathematician and astronomer, who united zeal for science with piety to God. Such is the testimony to his virtue, conveyed in these lines—

*“Astrorum motus omnes, arcanaque prompsit  
Dextera; mens hæret qui movet astra Deo.”*

On another, of the orator who loved peace, and who studied to preserve it to his fellow-citizens. Such is the inscription on Father Paulin, which is intended to transmit nothing more respecting him to posterity than that he loved peace and pursued it. There are tombs, as that of Wesling, the Mindan knight, to the learned and devoted physician, who had visited Egypt for the sake of studying exotic roots, and of acquiring a knowledge of all arts; and who, on returning, falls a victim to his pious labours in gratuitously tending the sick poor in a time of pestilence. There are others which attest the miracles of humility and of seraphic ardour, which have been wrought by the Catholic religion in the breasts of the learned, and of those endowed by heaven with extraordinary genius. Such is the tomb of that illustrious woman, Helen Cornelia Lucretia Piscopia Cornaro, who united an admirable sublimity of soul, and a most tender piety, to prodigious knowledge, being mistress of seven languages; so that, being greatly honoured by the princes of Europe, and especially by Pope Innocent XI., and after devoting herself to a life of religious and philosophic contemplation, coming to Padua in obedience to the command of her father, she received publicly the laurel crown of philosophy, an example unparalleled within the memory of man in that celebrated college. There are others, too, erected over the diligent, innocent, amiable, and holy youth, who, in the midst of his academic studies, distinguished himself by his kindness to the poor, and his ardent desires after the heavenly country, whose only fault was too much application and too little care of himself. Such, or similar, is the character ascribed on their sepulchres to Henry de Gram the Saxon, Camillus Bonaventura the Roman, Ludovicus of Brixia, Frederick Rota of Bergamo, and a number of other young noblemen and students, who died during their course at that university; and to some of whom, having no parents, the slab is erected by their dearest college friend. The affecting inscription on the tomb of Andrew Canzki, a young Pole, who died on his travels in Italy, would apply to many a pilgrim who visited that sacred land without ever seeing the day of return—

*“Italiam peragro dum sospes quinque per annos,  
Hei patrium repetens mors mihi vertit iter.”*

There are tombs which seem to admonish the living in asking indulgence for the dead. Such is that tomb of John Trivulzio Magnus, in the church of St. Nazarus at Milan, on which is written, “Joan Jacobus Magnus Trivultius Antonii filius, qui nunquam quievit quiescit. Tace.” And such that tomb over the beautiful Agnes in the Abbey of Jumièges, on which was this short and touching epitaph—“Cy gist

Damoiselle Agnes Seurette, en son vivant dame de beauté, Dissoudum et de Vernonsuo-Seine, pitieuse aux pauvres, laquelle trespassa le 9 Fevrier en l'an 1449.”\* There are others which seem not so much the tombs of men as the true monuments of chivalrous and Castilian honour. Such are those two sepulchres in the church of Santa Maria la Nova at Naples, which were generously raised by the Duke of Sessa, nephew of the Great Gonzalve and Governor of Naples, to two unfortunate warriors, who were his enemies, Lautrec and Pierre Navarre. There are some tombs, which so abruptly present the image of private domestic virtues amidst the solemn magnificence of sepulchral art, that it is hardly possible to view them without weeping. They affect the stranger, too, because in a foreign and beauteous land, they remind him of the virtues of his own, or rather that in every country the amiable disposition is the same. Such is that tomb in the Campo Santo, near Bologna, of a young Genoese, of Patrician family, John Baptiste Sebastian Cattaneo de Volta, whose innocent boyish form is represented above, and of the manners of whose holy youth a simple and touching account is given, describing how he sighed after heaven, and how for the first time he gave his parents sorrow when he died. Some tombs there were attesting the bonds of a mysterious friendship, such as that in the monastery of Medianum, which commemorated two brethren, John and Benign, both disciples of St. Hydulph, both born on the same day, and who were never separated from each other from childhood; having been educated together, trained in the same studies, clad in the monastic cowl on the same day; having lived together, fallen sick together on the same day, died and received into Heaven on the same, and then their bodies buried in one tomb.† There were tombs which seemed erected for the peculiar delight of poets. Such were those in the church of St. Francis at Ferrara. To commemorate heroes, sung by Ariosto, there were others, as if to proclaim, without vanity, the force of ancestral virtue, such as that in the church of Ecouen to the family of Chardon, on which one reads—

“Chardoneæ gentis cernis commune sepulcrum,  
Conspicuos clero, Marte, togâque viros.”

There are tombs on which the inscription seems to combine the playful irony of Socrates, during his last moments, described so sublimely in the Phædo, with the serene majesty of the Gospel. Such is that sepulchre in the cathedral of Ravenna, on which these words are inscribed—“Hic non jacet Donatus Capra. S. Raven. Ecclesiæ canonicus. Illud tantum hic jecit quod jacere potuisset in hoc monumento: mortalia deposuit qui totum virtute se voluit immortalem. Medicus fuit sed alios curavit non se ipsum. Suum esse nihil censuit præter animum. Et hoc nunquam ægrotavit. Sal. MDCIIL. recessit.” At least, the style of this inscription presents a great contrast to the first line on a neighbouring, but far more illustrious sepulchre—

“Hic Claudor Danthes Patris extorris ab oris.”

But it was not merely in the style of the inscriptions that the interest

\* Taillepie, Antiquitez de Rouen.

† Chronic. Senoniensis, lib. ii. c. xi. apud Dacher. tom. iii.

of the ancient Catholic sepulchres consisted. The designs, the emblems, the images, were all strongly characteristic of the ages of faith. Undoubtedly, pomp and magnificence belonged to the sepulchres of the great. "Henry VII. in Westminster dwelleth," as Lord Bacon says, "more richly dead in the monument of his tomb than he did alive in Richmond, or any of his palaces." King Henry III. caused a coffin to be made of pure gold and precious stones for the holy relics of Edward the Confessor, and so artificially was it carved by the most cunning goldsmiths, that, although the matter was of inestimable value, "yet the workmanship excelled it," as Matthew Paris saith. When Henry V. died, his queen, Catherine, caused a royal figure to be placed upon his tomb, covered all over with silver plate gilded, the head of which was of massive silver; so that, at "the reformation," when the "battering hammers of destruction," as Master Speed saith, "did sound in every church," it was broken and carried off as a prize, and only a headless monument left. "The funeral pomp and the solemn monuments, adorned with images and precious stones ought not," says Savedra, "to pass for signs of vanity in princes, but rather as evidence of a generous piety, which marks the last bounds of human greatness, and shows, in the magnificence with which it honours their ashes, the respect which is due to majesty, for tombs are a mute history of the duties, and the end of man."\* Neither ought this care of monuments, or attention to the preservation of particular bodies, to be regarded as arguing in the men of past times, any inconsistency in their firm belief respecting the general resurrection of the flesh. The moderns would have had nothing to teach them. "The dead," says Louis of Blois, "moulder into ashes, or are devoured by dogs; but all the particles that are dispersed are whole to God, for they are in those elements of the world whence they first came out when we were made: we see them not, but God knows whence he can bring them forth again, since, before we were, he knew how to produce us."† The emblems upon tombs, and the whole development of sepulchral architecture in the middle ages, indicated a mind essentially Christian; and the departure from this style, in the deplorable times which followed, was loudly lamented by all who retained any reverence for antiquity. "If any one," says Weever, "shall seriously survey the tombes erected in these our dayes, and examine the particulars of the personages wrought upon their tombes, he may easily discern the vanity of our mindes, veiled under our fantasticke habits and attires, which, in time to come, will be rather provocations to vice than incitations to virtue; and so the Temple of God shall become a schoole-house of the monstrous habits and attires of our present age; and which is worse, they garnish their tombes now adayes with the pictures of naked men and women, and bring into the Church the memories of the heathen gods and goddesses."‡

Upon the sepulchres of the middle ages, the Passion, or Resurrection of our Lord, were the most ordinary representations. Kings and nobles of illustrious houses sought no separation from ecclesiastics in the ornaments to be placed upon their graves. The magnificent tomb of Louis

\* Christian Prince, ii. 588.

† A Discourse of Funeral Monuments, chap. iii.

‡ Tractat. in Ps. lxii.



XII. and Anne of Bretagne, which was executed by Paul-Ponce, was surrounded with statues of the twelve Apostles. The tomb of O Piers Shoonks, lord of an ancient decayed house, well moated near Burnt Pelham, who died twenty years after the conquest, which is in the church of Pelham Furnix, contains his figure, carved in stone, and about it are represented an eagle, a lion, a bull, and an angel, to denote the four evangelists. Upon the wall of St. Paul's Cathedral, in London, was the image of Jesus, as also the figure of a lady kneeling before it, with this inscription, "Here, before the image of Jesu, lieth the worshipfull and right noble Ladie Margaret, Countesse of Shrewsbury, late wife of the true and victorious knight, John Talbot, Earle of Shrewsbury, which Countess passed from this world the fourteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord 1468; on whose soule Jesu have mercy. Amen."

Who has not experienced a mysterious influence on regarding the sepulchres of the middle ages, which remain in our ancient churches, where saints have left those weeds that in the last great day will shine so bright, on which kings and heroes, mitred monks, and blessed eremites, are represented in such revering forms of devotion that one almost expects to see tears start from them! These are all the works of men, who ever thought, as they carved the stone, that they were gaining heaven. Ah! how do these images of the dead seem to admonish the living! These hands, with palms so fervently joined, these arms, so meekly crossed upon the breast, that face, so full of sweet melancholy, that whole composure of the limbs, so humble, so devout, so full of reverence! How does not all this seem to admonish us, coming suddenly as we often do upon them, with obdurate hearts and minds distracted, and a body abandoned to a proud disdainful demeanour, the consequence of a long intercourse with the modern society which requires it as a passport to favour. How are we struck with awe, and how does the memory of holy things irresistibly return at the spectacle: the dead seem to reprove us from their sepulchres, and the stones themselves to have acquired an expression which can pierce through the very deepest intricacy of our hearts. If it were only on these grounds, methinks what St. Gregory of Tours relates would not seem incredible: that in the church of Vodollacenum, on the river Garonne, where two holy priests were buried, one near the south and the other near the north wall, while the clergy were singing the office, it was thought that the voices of these saints were heard to join in the choir with wonderful sweetness.\* These monuments were often designed and even executed by holy priests and religious men. The monk who wrote the chronicle of Sens published by Dacherius says, after relating the death of Anthony, Abbot of his monastery, "he was buried in a stone tomb, upon which afterwards I carved with my own hands an image of the abbot, as if reposing and holding his pastoral staff in his hand."† If Cicero thought it worthy of mention in his Tusculan disputations, that he had discovered under a covering of thorns and weeds, the antique sepulchre of Archimedes, bearing a sphere and a cylinder carved upon it,

\* De gloria Confessorum, cap. 47.

† Chronic. Sinoniensis, lib. ii. cap. 21. Spicileg. tom. iii.

which was unknown to the Syracusans themselves, what Catholic need fear to describe his impressions, when in a land of darkness and unbelief, he has unexpectedly found upon the earth-level tomb within some ancient desecrated temple, the sculptured form of a tonsured priest clad in holy vestments, and holding in his hands the chalice and the paten! Unknown and unintelligible to the descendants of the men who once were so familiar with holy rites, that poor stone seems in his eyes like an altar which it would be sacrilege to touch, excepting with the devout and solemn kiss of revering lips. Ah, if those who lie within these sepulchres were seen, what would be thought even by the simple rustics of the pompous and scornful men who now tread upon them, "ne'er mindful to ruminate the bed beneath their feet!"

St. Gregory of Tours, speaking of a place where the bodies of a vast number of the faithful were interred, after observing, "that although some who lay buried there had been blessed martyrs, yet they had no particular commemoration," concludes with a remark which must be often suggested to those who wander among the time-worn sepulchres of the ages of faith. "*Sunt enim ibi ut diximus,*" saith he, "*illustrium meritorum viri, quorum nomina, ignota incolis, scripta tamen ut credimus, retinentur in celis.*"\* It was not alone within churches that the monuments of the dead assumed that solemn form. There were holy fields in the neighbourhood of cities and within the walls of monasteries, which were all thick spread with sepulchres, like that place mentioned in the history of Charlemagne,† and alluded to by Dante, "where Rhone stagnates on the plains of Arles."‡ Archbishop Ubaldo Lanfranci, who accompanied Richard Cœur-de-Lion to the holy land, on his return in the year 1200, brought back with him to Pisa a large quantity of earth from Mount Calvary, and deposited it on the spot round which the cloisters of that celebrated Campo Santo were erected. On the great plains south of Paris, there was a place of burial from the time of the Pagans. An ancient oratory stood there dedicated under the invocation of St. Michael, for in former times there was always a St. Michael's chapel within or near great burying grounds.|| An image of the holy Archangel, weighing the souls in his balance, remained till the revolution, on the highest point over this plain, which was the pinnacle of the church of Notre Dame-des-Champs.§ The turret of the Holy Innocents at Paris, like that which Dom Mabillon remarked at Bonneval in the diocese of Chartres, and that of the cemetery of Sarlat, were probably to contain lights to guide persons who came to the church at matins. Peter the Venerable speaks of a tower built in the midst of the cemetery of the Abbey of Cherlieu, in the diocese of Macon, on the top of which a lamp used to be lighted every night, through respect for the holy place in which the faithful reposed;\*\* and in the cemetery of Cluny he mentions, that there was a stone pedestal in the centre on which there was a lamp which was always burning during the night, through reverence of the faithful who there rested.†† The cemetery of the Carthusian monastery of Calci near Pisa, is a most impressive and yet smiling

\* De gloria Confessorum, cap. 42.

† Turpin, cap. 28 and 30.

‡ Hell, ix.

|| Lebeuf, Hist. du diocèse de Paris, tom. iii. 230.

§ Id. tom. i. chap. 6.

\*\* Id. tom. i. chap. 2.

†† De Miraculis, lib. ii. 27.

spot. It forms a lovely garden in the midst of the cloister; a fountain of marble and bronze stands in the centre, and the Apennines clothed with olives rise on all sides in beautiful undulations above the white Arcades. On the right are buried the priests, in the centre are the lay-brethren, and on the left those who minister. Such is the plan adopted in all monasteries of that order, as may be seen at Florence, Pavia, Ferrara, and Bologna.

In conclusion, though it is painful to be obliged to introduce such recollections, we must remark that the ancient monuments of the Christian dead have in these latter ages been the object of both religious and political hatred, so that in England and France we have only some scanty vestiges remaining of the sepulchral magnificence of the ages of faith.

Weever was led to compile his great work on ancient funeral monuments from observing how barbarously the sepulchres and epitaphs of the illustrious dead in England had been broken down and effaced, the brazen inscriptions torn away for lucre sake, and their beauty destroyed through "the malignitie of wicked people, and," as he says, "our English profane tenacitie. Nothing," he adds, "will be shortly left to continue the memory of the deceased to posterity; pilfery and the opinion some have, that tombs and their epitaphs taste somewhat of popery, having already most sacrilegiously stolen, erased, and taken away, almost all the inscriptions and epitaphs inlaid or engraven upon sepulchres, and most shamefully defaced the glorious rich tombs and goodly monuments of our most worthy ancestors," and he expresses a wish that some order might be taken for the preservation of the few yet remaining, for to his own knowledge, by the observation he had made in many churches, "the monuments of the dead were daily thus abused." He says, "that the foulest and most inhuman action of these times was the violation of funeral monuments. Marbles which covered the dead were dug up and put to other uses; tombs hacked and hewn in pieces; inscriptions or epitaphs, especially if they began with an "orate pro anima," or concluded with "cujus animæ propitiatur deus," for greediness of the brass, or for that they were thought to be antichristian, pulled out from the sepulchres, and purloined, dead carcasses for gain of their stone or leaden coffins, cast out of their graves, notwithstanding this request engraven upon them, "propter misericordiam Jesu requiescant in pace." These commissioned grave-rakers, these gold-finders who make such deep search into the bottom of ancient sepulchres, pursued their barbarous rage against the dead, though in the second and fourteenth years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, their savage cruelty was discountenanced by a royal proclamation. He mentions, "that in Saint Leonard's church, Shoreditch, the ancient epitaphs were all taken away for covetousnesse of the brasse, by one Doctor Hanmer, vicar of this church, which he converted into coin, and presently after went over into Ireland. Even where tombs had not been purposely broken and destroyed, they were suffered to grow waste with devouring time, or to be hidden under the seats or pews then erected, as was the case," he says, "in our Lady's chapel at the Abbey of St. Alban's, which was filled with the dead bodies of the nobilitie, slain in the great battle near that town, whose trophies were now in this barbarous manner defaced. Many monuments of the dead," he says, "in churches in and about this city of



London, as also in some places of the country, are covered with seats or pews, made high and easie for the parishioners to sit or sleepe in; a fashion," he adds, and his testimony is remarkable, "of no long continuance, and worthy of reformation."\* With respect to the sacrilegious devastation of tombs in consequence of political fury, it is to France and the countries which unhappily fell under its impious domination, that we should rather look, though the religious reformers had been at work there also, for Francis Baldwin a French lawyer, in the time of Calvin, speaks of men then making war even upon the dead, the statues, sepulchres, the very bones and bodies of martyrs and princes, escaping not their barbarous hands.† Every one has heard how the French, in the first stage of their revolution, made war upon the dead and violated their quiet tombs, not being able to endure that mute history which, as Savedra says, "they afforded of the duties and the end of man; "but many are ignorant of the stupid and barbarous, and if possible, still more infatuated measure which they adopted every where, when they were phrenzied "to that worst pitch of all which wears a reasoning show," of transporting sepulchres from their original site, to form a museum of art in their capital, or within some central spot within the cities of which they had taken possession.

A greater proof of insensibility, of an utter want of all the feelings of taste and genius, to say nothing of religion, could scarcely be found in the history of nations. For what interest could be inspired by these tombs when deposited along with books and machinery in modern galleries of art, and removed from all the associations which had made them venerable? The sepulchre in which Abailard and Heloisa were buried, was indeed an object of interest when it was seen in the monastery of Paraclet, near Nogent-Sur-seine in Champagne, where Peter the Venerable had himself erected it; but what was it when placed in a museum in the street of the Augustins at Paris?

The tombs of the knights slain at the battle of Poitiers, such as those of the Duke of Athens, of John de Bourbon, of the two brothers, Chambely de Chatillon, and of other nobles who died for their country on that memorable day, could awaken a thousand recollections, and kindle an heroic flame, from the very circumstance of their being seen in the Franciscan convent in that city: but when removed to a distant capital, what were they but so many old stones, mere specimens of ancient sculpture? Poets might well direct their steps to the great Benedictine Abbey at Ferrara, in order to visit the sepulchre of Ariosto; but who could feel any interest in regarding it when it had been removed by those insane Frenchmen to the public library, in order, as they said, that it might be seen along with the finest editions of his poems! Yet this is done by the nation which has taken upon itself to designate the middle ages as a blank in history, an epoch when men were deprived of all intelligence and genius! It is, however, like striking the slain, to expose the weakness of these poor sophists; let us leave them to babble, and only remark within ourselves how wise were the ages of faith in respect even of all material arrangements, and how much more favourable they were, not only to poets, but to the common feelings of the human heart.

---

\* Funeral Mem. p. 701.  
VOL. II.—41

† Respons. ult. ad Jo. Calvin.

It was then that a natural order was followed, combining variety of measures in accordance with the variety of circumstances in nature. A poet, a learned philosopher, or a renowned hero, was buried in the church of his parish, in the monastery where he had died, or in his ancestral tomb.

In the eighth century, we find that the desire of being buried in one's paternal sepulchre led to the decrees of synods; \* although St. Augustin had shown, that the divine menace to a prophet, that he should not be buried in the sepulchre of his fathers,† was merely intended to excite a human affection, and was no further a punishment than in afflicting the living.‡ In like manner the works of a painter were deposited in the church for which he had designed them, to which, perhaps, like Rubens, he had presented them, as a perpetual memorial of his having within their walls received baptism, the portal to his faith. Thus every monument was seen in the place for which the master-mind of its author had designed it, and in connection with the circumstances which often constituted its chief interest. In this men followed wise and cunning Nature, who scatters her various productions over the whole world, and is never found to collect them all in one place, without regard to climate or locality, or to the harmonious accordance to surrounding tones and objects. Such was the system of the middle ages, when an idea was the origin and determining principle of every material monument, imparting to it life and reason. But for this the wisdom of the moderns has substituted a mere fictitious and nominal system, according to which, monuments are erected, and institutions founded at random, or from mere material motives, while, as it were, the soul is left to follow or not, as accident may determine. In order to have uniformity, and classification, and centralization in inanimate things, which, by their very nature, should be various and dispersed, these sophists, who introduce anarchy and division into spiritual things, hasten to disinter the dead, and to collect their mouldering ashes into common cemeteries, in the same manner as they would collect all the paintings and statues of every city in one gallery in Paris; thus presenting us, in one spot, with death in mass, and depriving all other places of the sanctity with which, when seen in detail, it had formerly invested them. No more tender connection can be traced between the study and the tomb, between genius and the country which it had adorned, between virtue and the home and friends to which it was endeared! but all is confounded and amassed together in one overwhelming crowd, to which an unnatural, unmeaning, and even burdensome uniformity, is imparted. True, these vast cemeteries, within the ancient enclosures of suppressed monasteries, may have an imposing aspect, from the beauty of the ancient site; and at all events, they supply an object to the idle traveller, who without it, might be at a loss which way to direct his steps; but assuredly one may regret the time when these sepulchres were found standing apart over the very graves which had originally received their tenants, when the knight lay by the side of the palmer, and the monarch by the counsellor whom he had loved; when one could trace signs of tender connection even among the dead, and when graves and tombs entered into the system of an har-

\* Dacherius Spicileg. tom. ix.

† 3 Reg. 13. 21.

‡ De Cura pro Mortuis.

monious variety. Such discipline, one may remark, was more favourable to the associations of the learned, to the illustration of history, to the interests of friendship, to the desire of mourners, and to one of the deepest, and perhaps most amiable feelings, of our nature.

---

## CHAPTER X.

BRIEF shall be the last act of what may be termed this fourth school, in our well-intended but imperfectly accomplished course. We have endeavoured to show, from ancient writings, what was the character of mourners during the ages which were most illuminated with the light of faith: and I am much deceived if enough has not been here advanced to prove that they were abundantly blessed; that if they were not able to define evil with as much minuteness as the ancient philosophers, they were able to escape from it better. That their mourning was sanctified and angelic; that it was blessed in their calamities, in their profound studies of wisdom, in their loves, in their spiritual exercises, in their penance, in their sickness, and in their death. They wept, it is true, before the Lord who made them. As the great Cardinal Bellarmin prescribes, they wept for sorrow, because they had provoked to anger the best of Parents: "they wept for joy, because the Lord who made them was mild and of great mercy: they wept for sorrow, because their benignant Creator, to whom the Church offers up prayers with weeping, loveth justice: they wept for joy, because He desireth not the death of sinners, but that they may be converted and that they may live."\* They mourned after the example of the prophets, of the apostles and of the universal Church. They mourned with a Bernard and a Vincent, from a consideration of sin and its penalty. They mourned with a Francis and a Bonaventura, from a remembrance of the passion of Christ. They mourned with an Anthony and a Hermit Nicholas, from an anticipation or a retrospect of the persecutions of the Church by heretics—for the latter foresaw the Lutheran, as the former had wept from foreseeing the Arian heresy. They mourned with an Augustin and a Chrysostom, from a consideration of the miseries of the human race. They mourned with a Thomas Aquinas and an Anselm, from the depth and penetration of a mind, to which were made known the hidden and unsearchable things of the wisdom of God. Finally, with a Bellarmin, they mourned, from a sense of the necessity of tears; for the sighs of the dove, the tears of the just—tears of sorrow and tears of love—are an earnest of the remission of sins, an imitation of the virtue of Christ, the nurse of compassion, of reformation of manners, and of charity. They indicate a contempt for the world and a love for God. They

---

\* Bellarmin. de Gemitu Columbæ. lib. i. c. 1.



are fruitful in works of penitence and mercy during life, and a consolation which surpasseth thought at the hour of death.

All this I have attempted to illustrate from the history of the ages of faith: but still, something more remains in reference to the conclusion of that benign and gracious sentence from the Mount, which proceeds to affirm that these mourners, seen to have been already blest from the operation of a general law, were, in addition, by an especial and supernatural grace, to be comforted. "Beati qui lugent quia consolabuntur." They that sowed in tears were to reap in joy: going they had wept, casting abroad their seeds; but coming, they were to return with exultation, carrying their sheaves with them. In this life they had sorrow, because, as St. Augustin interprets the passage, they had lost, by their conversion to God, parents, brethren, and friends, and felt that persecution, which all holy members of the Catholic Church will have to suffer in every age:\* or they had sorrow, because, according to the commentary of St. Jerome, St. Chrysostom, and St. Ambrose, they mourned for their own sins and for the sins of others. They thus had sorrow; a sorrow, indeed, most sweet: for, as St. Augustin says, "Dulciores sunt lacrymæ orantium, quam gaudia Theatrorum."† And though men of this world, who know not the sighs of the dove, can scarcely be persuaded of this, nevertheless, as Bellarmin says, it is most true.‡ Still, in comparison of what awaiteth those that are to be of angels signed, they had sorrow; but their Lord was again to see them, and their hearts were to rejoice, and their joy no one was to take from them. They were to be comforted. But who shall attempt to describe that comforting? Blessed be they that weep; and God himself shall wipe the tears from their eyes. "Those must needs be comfortable tears," adds Father Diego de Stella, "which the blessed hand of our Master doth wipe away!" Even in this brief and wretched life what comforting was theirs! St. Augustin remarks, "That it would be tedious to enumerate the instances of divine being called by the same names as human things, although they are separated from each other by an incomparable diversity."§ Man, when a citizen of the earthly republic, uses God's words, and imparts to them his own infelicity. Thus, in the language which conveys heavenly truth to his understanding, to mourn is to be brought as near to God, the source of all happiness, as the present condition of human life admits. In the language of the impious city, to mourn is to be wretched, to have every principle of joy annihilated within us,—that is, to be separated from him as far as possible. In the sense of faith, in the view of the city of God, mourning carries with it its own consolation; it is, in fact, only one component ray in the lustrous beam of that light which imparteth unclouded felicity. To mourning belongs charity, and the peace of God, along with which nothing harsh or bitter can ever enter, but only sweetness, and such happy things as have affinity with the glorious end for which souls were first created. Religion, in her severest discipline, seeks to render no one sad. She imposes misery on no one; but, as St. Bernard says, "Charitas vult te tuum sentire dolorem, ut jam non habeas unde dolere: vult

\* Lib. de Serm. Dom. in Monte.

† De Gemitu Columb. i. 3.

‡ Tract. in Psalm cxxvii.

§ De Diversis Quæst. ad Simplician. lib. i.

te tuam scire miseriam, ut incipias miser non esse.”\* The mourning which she inculcates stands opposed, therefore, not to joy and pleasure, as Johnson and other modern writers would insinuate, but to the sadness of the world and of death, to that unjust delight which, as the poet of old could discern, was necessarily followed by a bitter end—

———τὸ δὲ πᾶρ δίχαν

γλυκὺν πικροτάτα μενεῖ τελεντά.†

But, perhaps, some one will be inclined to suggest a doubt here; and will refer, in justification of his incredulity, to what has occurred during many ages in lands where heresy has been allowed to conquer, and to impart, in show, at least, all the treasures of the earth to such as fell down to worship it. Methinks I see his mind, by thought on thought arising, sore perplexed, and with vehement desire, seeking solution of the maze! True, there are cases, and history, both ancient and modern, furnishes numerous examples of it, when every one, at the bottom of his soul, is forced to admit, that the cause of the conqueror has pleased the Providence which rules the world, that of the conquered, good men. This history, undoubtedly involves one of them; but if these persons diligently attend, they will understand that, while full consolation was imparted to just mourners, even in the present life, to the unjust who seemed to have no need of consolation, the punishment of men was wanting, not that of God. Men defended a tyrant, and pursued and consummated what he had begun in a most detestable action; men praised a most base and pernicious sophistry; men pronounced a sentence of acquittal; men felt not in themselves the injury of their crime; men gave to these destroyers palaces and domains. I admit that all benefits from men were their's, and greater could not be demanded; but from God—Almighty God!—what greater punishment could fall upon them than that fury and madness? “Unless,” as Cicero says, “perchance, in tragedies, you think that those whom you behold, covered with wounds, and consumed with grief of body, are objects of greater wrath than those who are introduced raving and insane; but (as the Roman orator continues) the complaints and groans of Philoctetes are not so miserable as that exultation of Athamas, and those horrid dreams of matricide.” These sophists, in rejecting the sweet and salutary yoke of authority, when they overthrew the houses of the religious; when they drove the best men, by sanguinary laws, from the administration of the state; when they established the principle of private judgment, that is, universal disorder; when they overthrew holy churches, to build out of them palaces for themselves; when they profaned and abolished sacred rites; when they did not perceive that they were impious and insane; then did they suffer those punishments which alone, in many instances, in this present state of existence, are constituted, by the God of heaven, for the wickedness of men: for, indeed, the infirmity of our body is subject of itself to many sufferings, it is destroyed often by the slightest cause: the peace and joy of the soul can triumph over its pains; but the darts of God are plunged into the minds of the impious. Without doubt, some nations, in their collective capacity, have exhibited all the effects which might be expected à priori to follow from a judicial sentence

\* Epist. 2.

† Pindar, Isth. Od. vii.

registered against them in heaven; and that, too, while the citizens of the earthly republic were loud in their praises, admiring and esteeming them eminently glorious. True, indeed, great caution is necessary in coming even to any private conclusions with respect to the judgment of God, to which so many wise and holy men, like Cardinal Allen and his contemporary Bishop Watson, have wished that the punishment of states were wholly left; nor need any one be told that, according to ecclesiastical science, a general retention of sins can affect the title of no man formally; but leaving distinctions to divines, and, waving the theological argument altogether, there are historical facts crowding upon the memory, which may well incline thoughtful men to suspect secretly, that a great deal more may frequently be true than what the school requires them to believe, or even than what the caution of the school would permit them to announce. Wars, famine, and pestilence, are not the only scourges of God; there are moral invasions, which proclaim, with even greater certainty, the visitation of his anger: pride, avarice, and a mind wholly given up to the worship of matter, constant external prosperity, leading to hardness of heart, and misery of the poor: the being puffed up, like the Corinthians, having no more sorrow, no mourning of the dove, but in its place the gloom and sullen groans of Babylon; the want of spiritual resources, the want or the corruption of the word of God, and the confusion of Babel succeeding to unity of religion; the rich being engulfed in stupid sensuality, and involved in an ignorance which appears to some invincible; the co-operation of all things to obscure the light of Christ, and to make men aliens in spirit from his church;—these, and other effects following, from the removal of the candlestick, are still more evidently the inflictions of Divine justice; so that, whoever has beheld a nation, with manners thus opposite to the supernatural discipline of the city of God,—a nation, thus, to use prophetic language, adoring the beast and its image, receiving its inscription on the forehead and on the hand, may certainly be warranted in concluding, that he has seen a chastised people, not indeed without numerous particular exemptions, for the general schemes of Divine beneficence are never, in any place, wholly interrupted: but yet in its collective character, and as far as suits the purpose of furnishing a perpetual lesson to mankind, a people already punished, already under the fearful scourge of Almighty Providence, whether the cause be to human ken fathomable or not. But in the judgment of those who observe history with the eyes of faith this is the order of grace, and as clearly to be understood as that of nature. Peter and Paul, they say, live yet to mark our doings. Many a time ere now the sons have, for the sire's transgressions, wailed: and that living justice, upon the primal seat, vested with mysterious power, when it denounces pride no longer tolerable, binds it not in vain. The very heathen philosopher could discern what, in the secrets of Divine judgment, would be most terrible for man. "It was," says Maximus of Tyre, "from transgressing the eternal law that Alcibiades was unfortunate: not when he was summoned from Sicily by the Athenians, nor when he fled beyond Attica; these were small calamities, for Alcibiades in exile was greater than those who remained at home; he was honoured by the Lacedæmonians; he fortified Deceleia; he became the friend of Tissaphernes, and the general of Sparta: but the punishment of Alcibi-



ades began long before; it was ordained by an older law, and by older judges. When he left the Lyceum, was condemned by Socrates, and proscribed by philosophy:—then it was that Alcibiades was banished and undone.” And now, what remains but to express a fervent hope, that some of the many mourners of earth may be induced, by reflections such as these, drawn from the testimonies of past ages, to approach nearer than they have ever hitherto done to contemplate their history. For there is but one way to escape evil, which is by flying to the same citadel in which the ancient Christians stood, and thence taking up the same arms as were used by them; but, from it, alas! at how great a distance are the men of our age! “*O quam longe recessimus ab apostolica disciplina,*” cried Bellarmin, “*et quam rara nunc est, quæ olim frequentissima erat, gratia lacrymarum.*”<sup>\*</sup> Men of sorrows, who mourn with an unavailing, an unblessed grief, you may have heard how the Sage of Greece exhorted his anxious disciples to search, not only into the wisdom of their own country, but also into that of the barbarous nations, whose opinions and customs they should, he said, thoroughly investigate, in search of some epode, to deliver them from the fear of death, sparing neither riches nor labour, as there is nothing for which they could more wisely expend both.† In some respects, you stand in the same position as these disciples: in the midst of supposed superior civilization, and in spite of your profession, still conscious of being unpossessed of a practical remedy against that dread of death from which it is clear not all the advance of science, nor all the refinements of your philosophic and liberal views of religion can deliver you at your last hours. Be not then ashamed to imitate the humility prescribed to them, and take that salutary hint from old philosophy, and apply it to the present circumstances, and to your own condition. You call the ages of faith dark ages in the world’s history; and you suppose that the generation of men which succeeded, from the fall of the Roman empire till the sixteenth century, were a race of barbarians, at least in comparison with those which belong to the ancient and modern civilization. Well, be it so. Let us, for a moment, grant all that you demand; let us call them dark and barbarous ages. Literature, you say, will have it so; but remember that philosophy may take very little heed of the judgment of literature. At all events, it is never scared by a reproachful epithet; and you must admit, with Plato, that it matters not the least, whether you have recourse to Greeks or barbarians, provided you can but discover somewhere that epode, that efficacious remedy, to enable you to render blest your sorrows, your sickness, and your death.

At present, in the midst of all these modern lights, of all this boasted civilization, so contrary to the simplicity which characterizes the city of God, you mourn; you fear sickness; and, above all, you shrink in terror from the thought of death; at least, you cannot pretend that men in these days die with as much tranquillity, and with as bright and steadfast a hope as the men whose dissolution we have been witnessing in the ages which you designate as those of monastic darkness. You mourn, and your mourning is avowedly without hope, without a blessing. Indeed, your own guides affirm that, for sorrow, there is no rem-

<sup>\*</sup> De Gemitu Columbæ, lib. i. 9.

† Plato Phædo, 78.

edy provided by nature; it is often occasioned, by accidents irreparable, and dwells upon objects that have lost or changed their existence: it requires what it cannot hope, that the laws of the universe should be repealed, that the dead should return, or the past should be recalled. There is nothing in the modern civilization which can make it otherwise. Well, then, will it not be reasonable to try what may be found among the barbarians? "O, wearied spirits! come, and hold discourse with us, and be by none else restrained." "You have no comfort in your calamity," as the poet testifies, "but that of tears, and the cries of lamentation, and the Muse which has sorrow. This is all the sweetness which that muse can promise to you."\* "O, is it not just to call you," as the poet styled men of old, "unwise and vain, who have invented hymns for days of festal joy, for banqueting and triumph, the delightful sounds to sweeten prosperous life, but who have never discovered, by the muse and harmonious ode, how to soothe the bitter sorrows of mortals, when deaths and dreadful evils come to visit houses? then there would have been some advantage from song to wretched men; but in times of joyful feasting, what need of sounds to increase a pleasure which is already at its full—

στυγίους δὲ βροτῶν οὐδεὶς λύπας  
εὗρετο μούσῃ καὶ πολυχόρδοις  
ῥαΐς πάνιν, ἐξ ὧν θάνατοι,  
δεῖναι τε τύχαι σφάλλουσι δόμους.†

Ah! if you would but condescend to visit the humble and meek race, and investigate their ways, lifting up your eyes, like men in those antique days, to the mountains whence help might come to you,‡ you would, like them, find consolation according to the multitude of the sorrows which oppress your heart. *Secundum multitudinem dolorum meorum in corde meo, consolationes tuæ lætificaverunt animam meam.*|| Then you would say, like them, "Gladden the soul of thy servant, my Saviour and Creator; gladden it, because I have raised it to thee. It was on the earth, and on the earth it was full of bitterness; lest it should become corrupted through bitterness, lest it should lose all the sweetness of thy grace, I have raised it to thee, who alone art joy. The world is full of bitterness. Rightly are men admonished that they should raise their hearts to thee. Let them hear and obey. Let them raise to heaven what is wretched upon earth."§ St. Augustin has attempted to enumerate the principal sources of pain and sorrow to men, and mournful indeed is the view which he reveals of this life.\*\* Yet, then, with this confirmed, even by your own experience, "You would feel," as St. Chrysostom says, "that it was a greater gift to suffer than to raise the dead; for, by the gift of miracles, God would render thee a debtor to himself; whereas, when he sendeth thee sufferings, he maketh himself debtor to thee; he has pledged himself that you shall be comforted." Then, however afflicted, your peace of mind would not be lost: "But," as St. Bernard says, "your desolation would be sweet. Desolatur suaviter." Joy would well from grief, as in that beauteous gulf of Spezzia, where one sees the sweet water rise up out of the salt and bitter sea. "It is

\* Eurip. *Troades*, 608. † Eurip. *Medea*. 193. ‡ Ps. cxx. 1. || Ps. xciii. 19.  
§ Ludovic. Blosii *Tractat.* in Ps. lxxxv. \*\* De *Civitate Dei*, lib. xxii. 22.

only the beginning of misfortune," as the author of the *Martyrs* says, "which could for an instant alarm you." In the full height of adversity, you will find, in separating yourself from the earth, tranquil and serene regions; as when one ascends the bank of a furious torrent, one is horror struck at the entrance of the valley, and with the roar of the waves; but in proportion as one ascends the mountain, the falls diminish, the noise dies away, and the course of the traveller comes to an end in regions of silence near the sky, in sweet verdant spots, enamelled with a thousand new flowers, far from all that can wound or contaminate pure and innocent creatures. Yes, the ineffable goodness of God would be felt even when he punishes, for it would be the effect of his correction that you had discovered this source of surpassing joy. The hour when the solitary soul, widowed of its last hope, would expect nothing more from the earth, when friendship would fail, and weak man, who fears the contagion of misfortune, would leave you face to face with grief, when the future would have no longer any charms to make you wish for the morrow; then, if you were one of those humble and blessed mourners, the voice of God would be heard in the silence of your heart, that language which can be mixed with no other, and which consoles and beatifies those who cannot be otherwise comforted.\* At the sweet sounds of comfort you would turn from earth, and in saintly contemplation behold a love which must be left in silence here; "Nor through distrust," as Dante saith, "of words only, but that to such bliss the mind remounts not without aid."† Then, too, God would give such grace that, without boasting, you might use whatever language had been framed by sages to express how little they feared calamity: happy were your death, your ending blest, your torments easy, full of sweet delight. After having been in the dungeon in the midst of sufferings, like another chosen vessel, you would participate in his raptures into the third heaven; after having sunk under the weight of chains with Peter, you would be delivered and comforted by an angel. Do you not hear what the holy Church sings? Francis, Francis the mourner, the despised, the persecuted; Francis, poor and humble, enters rich into Heaven, and is honoured with celestial hymns. Well, then, thither too would you follow to receive the last abundant consolation, for

"There are the treasures tasted, that with tears  
Were in the Babylonian exile won."‡

Oh, that Highest God would deal thus with these poor mortals for whom Christ wept, and bled, and died, with these deceived but still generous creatures, once made in God's own image, in the freshness of their being so gifted virtually, that all better habits would wondrously have thrived, and possessed of faculties to be again his glorious champions, defenders of his holy city, the joy of mystic Sion. O that he would behold them in their state calamitous, betrayed by apostates, dispossessed of strength, and turn their labours, for he ever can, to peaceful end. Then, in the blest kingdoms, meek of joy and love, all the saints in solemn troops would entertain them. Angels, ever bright and fair, would sing; and, singing in great glory, comfort them, and wipe the tears for ever from their eyes.

\* La Martine, *Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses*.

† Parad. xviii. ‡ Id. xxiii.



## THE FIFTH BOOK.

## CHAPTER I.

AT the fourth counsel of the mystic song a sudden lustre, like the golden beams which brighten up the horizon at the evening hour, illuminated my heart. Methought a countless multitude of men, of every age, and order, and degree, passed before me. Emperors and princes were there, and mitred fathers, and whole hosts wrapped up in sable weeds; nor were wanting the ideal comrades of our youth, steel-clad knights, and gentle poets of the bower and hall; grave magistrates too followed amidst a throng of citizens and peasants, in which were some who toiled in trades laborious which seem base to the pride of mortals, and others who craved alms for sweet charity, and around each did shine an unimaginable light, encircling him as a luminary of eternal vision, which clearer than with any voice proclaimed his everlasting principedom. These were all they whose wishes tended to justice; for they shouted forth "Blessed," and ended with "I thirst." O how after each pause the harmony sounds more and more strange to ears of flesh and blood. We know, indeed, that all spirits on this earth hunger and thirst, as all mourn. Who has not observed, while wandering on the shore of brief life with wretched men, the careful provision made to satisfy the thirst for riches, the thirst for singularity, the thirst for novelty, the thirst for change, the thirst for honours, the thirst for the first seats, and for hearing Rabbi, the thirst for knowledge, perhaps, so praised by that Cheronæan sage, who says, "that letters and philosophy should imprint in our soul a passion similar to thirst and hunger, which would evince its power if we were deprived of them;" but unless when enjoying such visions from reverting to the traditions and monuments of ages of faith, where, O where is there any indication discernible among Adam's children of attention to the thirst for justice?

"My soul thirsteth after thee," said holy Israel's king. "Mark," adds St. Augustin, "how he thirsted. There are who thirst, but not after God. Whoever feels the ardour of desire, that desire is the thirst of his soul. And see how many desires are in the hearts of men! One desires gold, another possessions, another cattle, another houses, another honours. See how many desires, and how few men there are who ever say, 'my soul thirsteth after Thee,' for men thirst after the world, and they know not that they are in the desert of Idumæa, where their souls ought to thirst after God."\*

In submitting history to the investigations required here, there are many and various points to be kept in view. We should, in the first place, remark, how the need of a divine object for the wants of the soul was recognized, from which in a great measure followed the offices and

---

\* Tractat. in Ps. lxi.

festivals of religion, which must, therefore, be surveyed in order. This research will demonstrate what a zeal for religion animated men in all classes of society. And thus far our attention will seem to have been confined to verify the existence of the thirst which is blessed : but from this point, its fulfilment will be our theme ; for I shall then proceed to show in how admirable a manner the religious sentiment was reduced to action, which will lead on to a particular investigation of the state of morality in the ages which we review : when I shall have illustrated this statement by the evidence of contemporaneous authorities it will be necessary through regard for the mistakes and errors of later times, to show on what principle that whole system of morality depended, and what was its peculiar tone. After which inquiry, I shall bring the sixth book to an end.

All ages have been characterized by certain leading passions, which have impelled men to pursue some particular object of apparent good. Some, like the epoch which is distinguished by the rise of the new opinions in the fifteenth century, have been ages of avarice, of the reign of gold, when men thirsted after riches as the supreme felicity for which they were ready to make the sacrifice of their souls, pledging them to Satan, and of their bodies, literally offering them to the Jews. Others, like those we read about in times more remote, have been ages of what was vainly termed military glory ; others, like those associated on every tongue with names illustrious, ages of art and literature, because though no error of philosophy and no temporary delusion of the multitude could totally suppress the cry of nature, yet during those intervals, the possession of gold, military glory, art, and literature, were held up to the admiration of men, who always assent to a resolute affirmation, as being the proper object and the farthest end of their desires and activity. We judge thus of times prior to Christianity from what we find in the writings of their eminent men, and from what has been transmitted to us respecting their customs and institutions, and by using the same process of investigation in reference to the middle ages, we shall find reason to conclude, that during the long period which they comprise, the object recognized as being the legitimate end of all mortal desire, of all civil legislation, and of all individual exertion, was not gold, not military glory, not art or literature, but, strange and wondrous as it may sound to many, the eternal happiness of the soul, or the fulfilment of justice in accomplishing the will of God. The conclusion would not be that these were ages of perfect justice or of social perfection, which can only reign within the supernal city of God triumphant. Nay, where souls are imbruted in matter, the face of external things may often seem less disturbed than where men of desire with heavenly thirst inspired, are struggling to set them right ; but that the ruling passion which can be always discerned in the history of these times amidst the innumerable disorders to which as at all other periods of the world men were subject, cannot be otherwise designated than as the thirst after justice ; and if the proof be demanded, we find it in the institutions, legislation, and whole form of society which distinguished them, for which no parallel can be found in the annals of mankind, and which no ingenuity can trace to any other origin. The blessed mourning, from which we have so lately turned, seems to present itself to us again in

this place; for in the thirst after justice lies the secret of the inexhaustible tears and profound genius of the middle ages. Precious tears which flowed in limpid legends, in admirable poems, in sublime imagery. Yes, these complaints which they make of the course of things around them, from which modern writers attempt to deduce such calumnious inferences, prove only that they felt the eternity of that mystery which had its consummation on Calvary. They saw, as a living historian remarks, that Christ was still on the cross, and not likely soon to descend from it—that the passion continues and will continue. Behold these old statues in the cathedrals of the middle age! See how they implore with joined palms the long wished for and terrible moment when man for judgment is to wake from clay, wake for that great sentence of universal retribution, which is to put an end to the ineffable sorrow which has so long oppressed them. The present race of men are accustomed to look with indifference at the great crimes of nations, referring them either to the blind decrees of inexorable fate, or only founding on them commercial speculations, with the hope of enriching their own coffers. France, encouraged by some secret source of meanness and profligacy in the administrators of a greater power, is thus permitted to run her career from Ancona to the Tagus, unstigmatized by common voice, as if all sense of shame and honour were extinct in human breasts; but the cry of the middle ages in view of the calamities and injustice of men, while waiting for the hour of Almighty vengeance, might remind us of those words from the summit of the mystic cross, “*Tristis usque ad mortem.*”

The sages of antiquity were not wholly insensible to the necessity of having in view, amidst the perturbations and vicissitudes of life, a divine instead of a human end. Well had the Athenian in Plato maintained *χρῆναι τὸ μὲν σπουδαῖον σπουδάζειν, τὸ δὲ μὴ σπουδαῖον μὴ,\** and Plato himself continually shows the importance of having one supreme object, to which looking always, we may direct all our words and actions. He would have this question constantly addressed to his disciples, ὦ θανάσιμε, οὐδὲ δὲ ποῦ σκοπεῖς; τί ποτ' ἐκεῖνό ἐστι τὸ ἐν;† profound and searching words, at which even the children of light might sometimes tremble. Cicero in explaining why philosophy does not produce equal effects upon all minds, adduces the disposition of the youth with whom he converses, to feel unsatisfied with every thing human, as an evidence of the superior nobleness of his nature, and of its capabilities to profit by philosophy. “*Te natura excelsum quemdam videlicet, et altum, et humana despicientem genuit.*”‡ Thus we read of Schiller “his mind was not of that sort for which rest is provided in this world.” Faith imparted the privileges of genius, so as to make applicable to every man the mystic name of that founder of the religious metropolis of the Gauls, ποσειδώνος, the man of desire in whose breast was extinguished the expectation and even the desire of happiness on earth. His could only be a life of wishes, of longing, of labour, and restlessness; it must be made up all of sighs and tears, it must be all made of service, all made of fantasy, all made of hopes and fears, all adoration, duty, and observance, all humbleness, all patience, all purity, all trial. But while the thirst of the world appears in that real heart-rending sadness, which no imagi-

\* De Legibus, vii.

† Id. lib. xii.

‡ Tuscul. ii. 4.



nation can ennoble, the affliction of soul arising from the thirst for justice, is always sublime in its expression, and full of ideal grandeur, as in the piercing melodies of the choir. It was, however, in the schools of the true philosophers, and in the ages illuminated by the light of faith, that the vague and imperfect speculations of the ancient sages assumed the character of exact knowledge. "The reasonable spirit," says Louis of Blois, "is so noble, that no frail good is able to satisfy it."\* "Mundus propter te factus est," says St. Bernard, "ideo mundum non ames, quia mundus non est te dignus, quum sis eo longe dignior." Fallacious are the things which cannot always remain with us; things, adds St. Gregory, "which cannot expel the want of our minds." "Great is the dignity of the rational creature," exclaims Hugo of St. Victor, "to whom nothing less than the supreme good suffices, and great is its liberty, since it cannot be compelled to accept it."† St. Augustin had said the same. "Nothing temporal can satisfy the soul, whose seat is eternity,"‡ a proposition admitted by the modern poet, though with a senseless restriction.

---

"There is a fire  
And motion of the soul which will not dwell  
In its own narrow being, but aspire  
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;  
And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,  
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire  
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core  
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore."

The feeding of this fire is nevertheless represented by Plato, not as a fatal exercise, but as preserving the sustenance necessary for the intellectual health. "The entire soul," saith he, "in the best natures, receives a more honourable condition from possessing temperance and justice with wisdom, than the body acquires strength and beauty from health, in the same proportion as the soul is more honourable than the body; therefore, whoever has sense, will live, making all things tend to this end; in the first place honouring instruction which gives him such a soul, and despising every thing else."§ How brightly that heavenly fire did burn even in the breast of warlike men in the most chivalrous ages, may be witnessed in Godfrey, when in a vision he is represented beholding the contrast of heaven and earth.

---

"He bended down  
His looks to ground, and half in scorn he smil'd;  
He saw at once earth, sea, flood, castle, town,  
Strangely divided, strangely all compil'd,  
And wonder'd folly man so far should drown,  
To set his heart on things so base and vild,  
That servile empire searcheth, and dumb fame,  
And scorns Heav'n's bliss, yet proff'reth Heaven the same."\*\*

In vain are all these public and private contrivances, day by day, continually throughout the year, to repel, as Thucydides says, τὸ λυπηρόν.††

---

\* Ludovic. Blosii Instit. Spirit. cap. i.

† Hugo de St. Vict. Eruditiones Theologicæ, tit. vii.

‡ De Doctrin. Christ. lib. i. 38.

|| Childe Harold, iii.

§ De Repub. lib. ix.

\*\* Book xiv. ii.

†† Lib. ii. 38.

“Born,” says St. Gregory, “to the sorrows of this journey, we may indeed have arrived at that degree of fastidiousness as not even to know what we ought to desire.”\* But what is naturally wished by the human will, is justice, as Duns Scotus profoundly observes, for that is its perfection; since, as the inferior irrational nature has a principle of tending to that which naturally agrees with it, so the will has necessarily a principle of tending to justice, which is the end that agrees with its nature.† Hugo of St. Victor makes a curious remark to show how clearly the human heart discerns that it is made for higher than earthly joys. When speaking of the words of Ecclesiastes, that all things under the sun are vanity, he adds, “I know not wherefore, but these words when they are read sound sweet in our ears. We are glad to be told of our evils, and what we do not love we nevertheless love to hear, for we do not love our evils, and yet we love to hear of them. The reason must be, that by hearing of the evil which we do not love, we are reminded of the good which we love; and this remembrance of good, even amidst evils, is sweet to the mind, and so much the sweeter as the evils are more bitter, which when hearing or feeling we discern to be far removed from the good to which we aspire. So that when the sorrows of our exile are described and the extent of our misery declared, our mind awakening as if from a long sleep, suddenly remembers where it once was, and from a view of the mighty ruins, it calculates the height of the summit from which it fell. This is what renders lamentation so sweet to the miserable, and which converts their sighs and tears into such delicious food.”‡

The need, however, of a divine object appeared obvious, not only from a consideration of the dignity of our nature, but also from a sense of what was requisite to procure it so much of present happiness as was allowable in the world of wishes or innocent amidst the phantoms of sin and vanity. Did any one hope to satisfy his thirst from the broken cisterns of the world’s joy? Phædra, in her sickness, was a symbol of the destiny which awaited him; for of him it would soon be said with truth, you take pleasure in nothing; you change from one place to another; the present is displeasing, the absent is thought dearer.

οὐδέ σ’ ἀρέσκει τὸ παρὸν, τὸ δ’ ἀπὸν  
φίλπερον ἤγει. ||

The reason of which calamity was remarked by Cicero, when he says that lust can never find an end.§ The ambitious, as Cardan remarks, are all inconstant,\*\* for no one who thirsts for visible things can ever be satisfied; since, as Hugo of St. Victor says, “the whole world would not suffice to man, who is the lord of the world. The eye cannot be satisfied with seeing nor the ear with hearing.”†† “The world cries, I fail; the flesh cries, I corrupt; the demon cries, I deceive; Christ cries, I restore; and yet,” adds St. Bernard, “such is the blindness and madness of our minds, that leaving Christ who invites us with loving words, we follow the failing world, the corrupting flesh, and the

\* Hom. in Ev. 36.

† Duns Scoti, lib. ii. Sentent. Dist. xxxix. 9. 1.

‡ Annotationes Elucidatoriæ in Ecclesiast. Hom. ii.

|| Eurip. Hyppolyt. 185.

§ Tuscul. v. 7.

\*\* De Sapientia, lib. iii.

†† Instit. Monast. xxix.

deceiving demon." "The more one drinks," says Richard of St. Victor, "the more one thirsts, for, to satisfy the appetite of sensuality, the whole world would not suffice."\* Nor is it more able to satisfy any of those vague desires which are so powerful in men of acutely sensitive minds, and which attach them with such affection to the remembrance of their youth, to the days that were embalmed with friendship and with poesy. "There was a time, too, when I could weep," cries Schiller; "O ye days of peace, thou castle of my father, ye green lovely valleys! O all ye Elysian scenes of my childhood! will ye never come again, never with your balmy sighing cool my burning bosom? Mourn with me, nature! they will never come again, never cool my burning bosom with their balmy sighing—they are gone! gone! and may not return." Return! perhaps he would not that they should, as the profound thinkers of the middle age would remark, though his words express that wish. Hugo of St. Victor felt this mystery of our heart. "O ancient time, where art thou?" he exclaims, "formerly while thou existed I loved thee, and now when thou hast ceased to exist, I love thee still; nor can thy departure ever diminish my love for thee. While present I loved thee that thou mightest remain, and now that thou art no more I love thee, and yet I do not wish that thou shouldst return to me. Marvellous desire, incomprehensible affection. What can I love in thee if I am unwilling that thou shouldst exist, unwilling that thou shouldst return? What is that unheard of affection when a thing is loved, and yet its presence is not loved? Who will explain to me this love of my heart? The reason why I will not that thou shouldst return again is this, that I desire rather to be with thee where thou art now. Formerly I loved thee perversely, when I wished thee to remain with me when I was in exile, and now I love thee with more consideration, because I wish to be with thee in our country, where thou wilt subsist forever."† The experience of ages had demonstrated that without a view to the final consummation of all perfection in the reign of everlasting justice, men are sure to find nothing on their pilgrimage but disappointment, and without faith, despair. "Oblivion on this earth," cries a poet of France in a passage of unmingled bitterness, composed a few days before his death, "Oblivion on this earth, and beyond it. Behold, friend, my life and my eternity! Oblivion, for I have passed without leaving a trace! Oblivion! for how little place demands my grave! Poor, unknown, without a destiny, lost in a crowd, atom cast upon the vulgar wave, like every other mortal that floats with us, I have gathered and borne my crown of thorns, and beyond that nothing."‡ Behold the end of man's distempered thirst.

—"O blind lust!

O foolish wrath! who so dost goad us on  
In the brief life, and in the eternal then  
Thus miserably o'erwhelm us."||

It is an error to suppose that these melancholy views of the natural life date from a recent epoch. Cardan, who never heard the modern strains, remarks "that in youth, when all things flourish, strength,

\* De præparatione animi ad contemplationem, cap. vi.

† De Vanitate Mundi, lib. ii.

‡ Brugnot.

|| Dante, Hell, xii.



senses, beauty, and genius, not unfrequently we feel life wearisome.”\* All that is not God is nothing. Hence the certain disappointment which awaits our vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires; for “the hopes of men,” as Pindar says, “are tossed up and down upon a sea of error.”† Not the highest, firmest seats of earthly grandeur can give them rest. Otho the third emperor, was openly joyous, but on account of the warning of blessed Heribert, he secretly groaned and wept.‡ Excepting the thirst for justice or the ardent desire of pleasing God, there is no movement of the soul which can be trusted without deliberation. “Noli inniti prudentiæ tuæ,” says Solomon, “for,” adds Richard of St. Victor, “man knows not what may conduce to good in this life, in the number of the days of his peregrination, and in the time which passes away as a shadow.”§ Yes, it was well understood in the ages of faith, that we need a divine object; that all else is mutable in man. “God alone,” says a French historian, “can rejoice over his work, and say that it is good. When man has toiled and conquered, he lets fall from his hands the long desired object, disgusted with it and with himself. Thus Alexander died of sadness, when he had conquered Asia, and Alaric when he had taken Rome. Godefroy of Bouillon had no sooner possession of the Holy Land than he sat discouraged on the earth, and languished for rest within its bosom.” Genius has no privilege here, for its most adored creation is sure to crumble into dust as soon as perfected. St. Augustin calls the image which we represent to ourselves in conceiving any object “the son of our heart.”§ These sons die before us. To have this illustrated, you need only hear Schiller speaking of his Don Carlos, and accounting for its irregularity. “Some time elapsed,” says he, “between beginning and concluding it; I commenced the fourth and fifth acts with quite an altered heart.” Little strange should it seem that the struggles of individual unassisted genius prove insufficient, when even the sublimest works of religious art in ages of faith, indicate that they had not satisfied their authors. The gentle breath of that spirit which passed before the face of Daniel, carrying away kingdoms and breaking empires—that spirit which animated the artists of the middle age, which enabled them to raise those mountains of vaults and towers into the air by giving them a force greater than the arms of Titans; that spirit, let it work what it will, is always ill at ease in its dwelling. It can extend, and vary, and adorn it, but it cannot rest in it. “See these admirable cathedrals,” continues Michelet, “however beautiful they may be, with their towers and their saints in glories, they cannot contain it. Around the church we must build little churches; it must radiate with chapels. Beyond the altar we must raise an altar, a sanctuary behind the sanctuary.” Experience and reflection had convinced philosophers of this impossibility of satisfying the thirst of the soul with any thing human, and hence it is, that, as Novalis remarks,\*\* “every science had its god, which was its end. Mechanics lived upon the perpetual motion, and their highest aim was the construction of a perpetuum mobile. So also chemistry had its menstruum universale, or its philos-

§ Hieron. Cardani de Consolatione, lib. ii.

† Drexellii aurifodina.

§ De Trinitate, lib. xi.

† Olymp. car. xii.

§ De statu interioris hominis, lib. i. c. 24.

\*\* Schriften, ii. 231.

opher's stone. Philosophy sought a first principle; mathematical, the quadrature of the circle; medical, a life elixir; political, a perfect freedom with government. The philosophers of the middle age all sought the unlimited, though they found only what is limited. They sought infinity, though they found only things."

Ardent minds, endowed with the faculty of extending the field of positive knowledge, would never in those spiritual ages have devoted themselves to dry studies, if the imagination had not proposed a mysterious end as the desired result of their labours. Raymond Lully, Albert, Picus of Mirandola, Cardan, and others of that type, had all a nobler though less practical object in view than what is generally ascribed to them, ideal and often fantastical it is true, but still the secret fire which instigated them to such prodigious labours.

But this disappointment was the punishment of pride, methinks I hear some one reply. In the mere research or discovery of natural truth, these men would have found that rest and satisfaction, which would have filled the vacuum of their hearts. Vain pretension of modern philosophers, which the weakest can see through; for if he who should say that he had opened certain great fountains which had been concealed, were to say this, at the same time exhibiting every indication of thirst, would it not be ridiculous? And is it not absurd when these men who affirm that they are not only the lords of fountains, but that they are themselves fountains, and able to irrigate the minds of all, while they promise this to others, are themselves parched up with thirst? \*

The great masters of the spiritual life discovered that it was the absence or presence of the thirst after justice which caused sadness or joy. "Si quis mundum omnino odit," says St. John Climacus, "hic tristitiam effugit. Porro, si quis qualibet visibilium rerum affectione mordetur, tristitia nondum liberatus est."† They saw that in fact men were constantly committing the double error of Narcissus and its opposite, concluding that a substance is a shadow, as often as they mistook a shadow for a substance. To privation all men are doomed on this earth, but those are least wretched who are pitied most; for it is not an imaginary good as many suppose, to have one's affections centered upon a heavenly end, nor is it a substantial felicity to have reaped the shadows of human kindness, which pass like the wind upon the rocks of the desert.

Goethe represents Tasso thirsting with all the ardour of a youthful and poetic genius for the friendship of Antonio, and we think him deserving of pity, because the latter meets his advances with the formality, and coldness and distrust of one who makes the world his friend; but had he found a heart of other mould, and sought it so, there would have only been a postponement of the bitter hour. Happy the man who learneth not by experience, when it is too late, the folly of placing confidence in the stability of creatures, or in any thing but in the very root and substance of justice. Are you labouring for the glory which Pindar promises to the conqueror, saying,

μέγα πὺ κλέος αἰεὶ  
ᾧ τινι σὸν γέρας ἔσπετ' ἀγλαόν? ‡

\* Cicero ad Herennium, lib. iv. 6.

† Scala Paradisi Grad. ii.

‡ Olymp. viii.

Do you expect happiness in the friendship of those who are not associated in the privileges of eternal good? You are sowing the wind, you are embracing a shadow, “*quia citius obliviscentur tui homines, quam æstimas.*” What profound scars does misfortune, and often too that which is called by fools prosperity, leave in the soul! How quickly it uproots from a heart that is not Christian, all hope, and all poesy! How soon one arrives with the evil genius of France at seeing in the life of nations as in that of individuals, a cold pleasantry of fate! “Before the fall, man was full, because God was his centre; but,” continues Baader, “after it he became internally void, God ceased to be his centre, and instead of filling him internally, compressed him from without, and hence being unable to sustain himself, he falls with a weight upon some thing external, in order to be sustained.” While thus placed he has but one alternative, to be wretched, seeking happiness in the love of creatures, or to be desiring and hoping, looking towards that primal seat, “*ubi pulchritudo est et satietas æterna,*” and praying in words like those with which Dante addresses the blessed spirits:—

————— “O perennial flowers  
Of gladness everlasting, that exhale  
In single breath your odours manifold;  
Breathe now; and let the hunger be appeased,  
That with great craving long hath held my soul,  
Finding no food on earth.”\*

It is when brought to this state, that according to the writers of the middle age, the Father draws a man to Christ: “for,” says the author of *Theologia Germanica*, “when any thing of this perfect good is uncovered and manifested to the soul, as if in a moment, there arises in that man a desire of approaching to this perfect good, and of uniting himself to it. The greater is this desire, the more is revealed to him; the more he thirsts, the more he is satisfied; and the more there is revealed to him, the more he desires and is drawn. Thus man is drawn to a conjunction with the eternal good, and this is the drawing of the Father.”† This was the direction given to the human intelligence during the supernatural ages of which I am attempting the history. It was accurately ascertained that the thirst of men was not for any secondary stream, but for the great original Source of justice. “At the banquet of God,” says Hugo of St. Victor, “there is but one dish, but despise it not, for it satiates. Many things are in the world, and none of them can fill man’s heart, but there is one good with God, and when this is found, all is found. ‘*Ergo non in multitudine, sed in unitate satietas est.*’”‡ The cry of the middle ages was that of the prophet, “*Mihi autem adhærere Deo, bonum est,*” interpreted according to the comment of St. Augustin. “Many were the opinions of philosophers respecting the chief good; but he does not say, for me to have riches is good, or to have a crown and sceptre is good, or what some of them did not blush to say, for me to have sensual pleasure is good, or what sounds better, for me to have virtue is good, but for me to adhere to God, is good; this, therefore, is the chief good of man.”||

\* Parad. xix.

† Cap. 54.

‡ Annot. in *Cœlest. Hierarch.*|| *De Civitate Dei*, lib. x. 18.



## CHAPTER II.

THAT such was the thirst of men during ages of faith, will appear more clearly as we proceed to inquire in what manner it developed itself, and what were its effects ; for in truth, the whole life of man, the whole constitution of society, notwithstanding all its defects and abuses, was a continued display and evidence of its power. Who sees not that this was the thirst which imparted that theocratic character to the nations of Europe which induces philosophers like Vico to designate this period by the title of a divine and heroic age? Who does not discern that it was this thirst which moved men to cover the earth with so many noble monuments of piety, so many institutions of mercy ; which rendered the whole life of so many great artists devoted to the honour and service of the Catholic Church ; a kind of continual fever, which made men legislate for heaven rather than for earth, for the celestial rather than for the human republic ; which drew some from the arid desert of the world to seek the living waters in the paradise of cloistered shades, and others to devote their bodies as witnesses for justice amidst the profane city ; that this was the thirst which made the true, devoted pilgrim pursue his way, so wearisome and long, undaunted, and firm, in his fixed resolve to measure kingdoms with his feeble steps? What else was it but this thirst which drew a St. Dorothea from Danzig to Agen, to venerate its holy relics, and to visit the hermit in the dark wood adjacent, for whose little chapel thrice she left her home, and made that long journey of desire in time of war, when robbers infested all the ways, from whose barbarous hands she suffered griefs unnumbered? What other cause impelled her afterwards to traverse Germany and Italy, to visit Rome for the jubilee, with such ardour, that during the whole pilgrimage, it is said, she slept but one night, which was the second after arriving in the holy city? Was it not also this thirst which gave rise to the interminable toils of Christian knighthood, and to all the wondrous and acute provisions which were prescribed for ministering to the wants of human society? But that our path through this thick wood may not seem retrograde or endless, let us take some one object of unquestioned interest as the scope of our enterprise, that by the complete survey of it we may have a swift, delightful, as well as an instructive way, in exposing the admirable manifestation of this divine thirst.

In the school before our last, we had occasion to unfold the history of churches, with all that related to their origin, construction, and adornment. We have seen with what truth the divine words may be applied to them, they were made by God. "Since," as St. Augustin says, "from him is every perfect gift, and that to construct those houses of prayer, he visited the minds of his faithful, excited their affections, supplied assistance, inspired their wills that they should will, assisted the efforts of their good will that they should accomplish, so that it was God who worketh in us both to will and to do his of good pleasure, that began and perfected all these things."\* The present has appeared the

---

\* St. August. Serm. 256 de Tempore.

proper place for resuming, as it were, that story, and for considering the holy offices which were celebrated within these divinely constructed walls, and the various festivals which pious devotion commemorated there; for the voice of the Church was the language of desire, and the expression of that thirst which is assuaged only by justice, only by beholding the face of Him uncovered who is seen veiled upon the altar, who is himself in infinite perfection, justice and truth; and if the historian of France can justly affirm that material monuments, such as the cathedrals of Paris and Rheims, are great historical facts which speak more than long narrations, surely it will not be irrelevant to the enterprise of those who seek information respecting the intimate sentiments of the middle age, to inquire what was the purpose to which these were applied, what was the spirit within that marvellous symbolism which astonishes by its vastness and soothes by its peerless beauty?

To minds thoroughly imbued with a sense of justice, the world even in that age of Christian institutions presented a chaos. The soul of man aspired to order, and it hoped to find it in the symbolic ceremonies of faith. In the Church alone was the intelligence of man, his true life, and his rest. The constant love with which the divine offices were celebrated during the middle ages, can be referred to no other source but the disposition which is pronounced blessed from the mountain. It undoubtedly originated in a thirst for justice, a thirst for order, a thirst for the invisible supreme good of which all earthly forms of beauty were converted by it into symbols. Let us proceed, therefore, by first casting a glance at the history of their institution.

In the infancy of the Church immediately after the resurrection of our Lord, we find that his disciples were always in the temple praising and blessing God.\* Philo Judæus wrote a book, "*De Vita Christianorum*," in which he describes how the Christians passed their time in public psalmody and hymns, keeping vigils during the night, and singing in praise of God, making stations at altars and joining in alternate chorus.† Lucian, the atheist, in one of his dialogues, laughs at the Christians for passing whole nights in singing hymns and vigils.‡ Pliny relates to Trajan that they used to assemble before light to sing hymns to Christ,§ and Ammianus Marcellinus, another heathen writer, records the custom of the Christians passing the night in their churches. The offices of prime, tierce, sext, nones, vespers, and matins, are spoken of in the apostolic constitutions, and by St. Dionysius, the Areopagite.¶ Tertullian, in the beginning of the third century, describes the early congregation of the faithful before light, and expressly mentions the celebration of the third, sixth, ninth, and vesper hours. Origen in his third book on Job, alludes to their matins and vespers, and Clemens Alexandrinus in the ninth of the *Stromata*, commemorates tierce, sext, and nones, as does also St. Cyprian in his book "*De Oratione Dominica*." St. Zeno, in his first sermon to the Neophytes, praises "the sweet vigils of the bright night," and Cæcilius with Minutius Felix, calumniates the nocturnal congregation of the Christians, calling them, "late-

---

\* S. Luc. xxiv. 53.

† Suidas in Vit. Philo. Euseb. lib. ii. c. 17.

‡ In Philopatæ.

§ Lib. x. c. 97.

¶ Cardinal Bona, de divina Psalmodia, cap. 1. §. 4.

brosos et lucifugaces." In the same age, St. Hippolytus, the Martyr, in a discourse on the end of the world, says, that one effect of the coming of antichrist will be the abolition of the psalmody and sacred rites of the Church. When St. Basil was detained in prison, some clerks and deacons gave money to the guards that they might gain entrance, in order to sing with him during the night the divine offices. This is related by John, the Priest, of Nicomedia. In the fourth century there are abundant testimonies, in Eusebius Cæsariensis, St. Athanasius, St. Basil, and St. Gregory Nazianzen. From these it appears that the psalm "Deus, Deus meus," and also that "Benedicite omnia opera," were then sung at matutinal lauds. The duty and happiness of this early thanksgiving are feelingly enforced by these great saints, who describe the solemn beauty of the nocturnal chorus. Palladius, speaking of the mountain of Nitria, on which five thousand monks lived in the time of the great St. Anthony, says, "At the ninth hour, you might hear in each monastery the hymns and psalms sung to Christ, with prayers and lauds, so that you might suppose yourself passed into a paradise of joy."\* St. Jerome and St. Chrysostom explain the particular object of each hour's devotion. At the rising of the sun, it was to return thanks to God; at tierce, to commemorate the descent of the Holy Ghost at this hour; at sext, the fastening of Christ to the cross; at nones, his giving up the ghost; at the setting of the sun to thank God for the mercies of the past day: and then they enumerate the nocturnal vigils and matutinal lauds at the first crowing of the cock. St. Augustin, in numerous places, mentions the same offices, as does also Cassian in his description of the ecclesiastical and monastic life. Peter Chrysologus, Synescius, Victor Uticensis, and St. Cæsarius of Arles, are equally clear in describing the nocturnal vigils, and the daily offices; and holy men in dying used to instruct youths in the manner of observing them.† Nilus the Monk, relates that the holy fathers in Sina were killed by the barbarians at break of day, at the end of their matutinal hymns. In the sixth century, the most holy Benedict furnishes in his Rule an evidence of the fervour with which men studied the praise of God; and in the following age, his disciple Gregory the Great closes the evidence produced by Cardinal Bona, in the history of the divine psalmody. Then followed Isidore of Spain, Alcuin of England, Amalarius Fortunatus, Rabanus Maurus, Walfridus Strabo, Rupertus Abbas, Hugo de St. Victor, and others, who cultivated the exercise of the divine offices with the greatest fervour. Thus we discern the gross error of Polidorus Virgil, who supposes the institution of the sacred hours to have arisen in the time of Pelagius II., whereas Cardinal Bona has fully shown that they commenced with the infant Church. Palladius declares that he beheld a state in which there were more monasteries than profane houses, that the divine praises were sung in every spot, and that the whole city seemed to be one church.‡ In Bythinia arose monasteries ἀκουήτων, in which the divine praises were unceasingly sung night and day. Nicephorus relates that one of these was built in Constantinople, in which an association of monks, divided into three choirs, maintained

\* Hist. Lauriaca, cap. 7.

† See Histor. Lauriaca.

‡ Metaph. Duty apud Surium. 12 Septembre.



an unceasing psalmody. St. Columban, at Luxeuil, instituted a similar monastery, and St. Gregory of Tours mentions another at Agen. The same rule was observed in the Abbey of St. Denis, and in that of Tours, and in many houses of the Cistercian order. The minds of men ever rested upon that divine verse, "*Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine; in sæcula sæculorum laudabunt te.*" Of the clergy of Paris, in the time of St. Germain, Fortunatus says,—

"Carminè Davidico divina poemata pangens  
Cursibus assiduus dulce revolvit opus."

The Cistercian monks always celebrated lauds at break of day, and, therefore, in the winter season, after singing nocturns, they always returned to their cells to spend the interval in study or prayer until the first break of light; but in the summer they sung lauds immediately after matins.\* St. Ambrose furnishes evidence that in his time, people of all sorts came to matins on Sunday, men and women, youth and old people, only one or two remained at home to guard the house.† The sacred Scriptures every where record that just men in all ages observed the break of day to devote it to religion. "*Dominus visitat hominem diluculo:*" and he sends his prophets rising early.‡ Job, the mirror of justice, rising up early offered sacrifice for himself and his sons,|| whom he charges to rise up early to God. The holy David meditates the secrets of God in the morning watch, and early in the morning offers praise to God. The just are then all united in sacrifice and prayer, and as Hugo Victorinus says, "There is nothing which Satan so much fears as the unity of charity." The morning is symbolical of piety. The ancient Etruscans offered honey to Aurora, which we consecrate with the sweetness of devotion. The poets represented Aurora as mounted upon Pegasus, because the soul is then light to fly upon the wings of contemplation. Some thought it was called Aurora, from the golden colour of the sky. Taking occasion from this emblem, the writers of the middle age observe, that we ought to shine in the morning with the gold of charity, and, that as the poet Nævius speaks of blushing Aurora, so should the modest colour represent the grace of chaste purity in our souls. Homer calls the morning divine, because it brings us light, which is the symbol of the divinity. Therefore with the rising light the children of divine light, emulating the holy angels, who are called the morning stars, sing praises to the Author of light, and shine to him with joy.§ St. Ambrose says, that even the example of the birds should admonish men to praise their Creator at the rise of morning, and to begin the day with the solemnity of psalms.\*\* Celebrated, say the Fathers, is the statue of Memnon, described by Philostratus and Callistratus, which of its own accord when first illumined by the golden rays of morning, used to emit a sweet and ravishing sound, an emblem which might remind men to adore the majesty of their Creator at the rising of the sun. Durantus Tholosanus says, that the hour of tierce used to be called the golden hour. In the canonical law, it is styled sacred, because it is at this hour that the sacred mass is celebrated with solemnity on days of high festi-

\* Card. Bona, de divina Psalmod. 142.

† Eccl. xxxix. 6.

§ Card. Bona, de divina Psalmod. 145.

† S. Ambros. Serm. 34. de Tempore.

|| Job. vii. 18.

\*\* Exam. lib. iv. c. 1.

val, as the ancient custom of the Church has ordained in order to commemorate the descent of the Holy Ghost.

On the various parts of the divine offices let us now briefly dwell.

Photius says, that a hymn is so called, "quasi ὑπομνησις," that is, a commemoration of something past. Eusebius speaks at length on the hymns which the Christians used to sing in the very infancy of the Church. The proses, or sequences, in which we trace the first beginning of the rhyme which distinguishes the modern from the ancient classic poetry,\* are said to have been invented by Notker, a monk of St. Gall, in the year 880, whose version of the Psalms in German is still extant; but this monk affirms that he had seen the first model of them in a missal of the abbey of Jumièges, which was burned by the Normans in the middle of that century. The celebrated sequence, "Veni, Sancte Spiritus," is attributed to Hermann, or to Pope Innocent III. That of Dies Iræ is ascribed to Thomas Celanus, of the order of St. Francis, in the thirteenth century. Of the same order was Jacoponus, who in the fourteenth, composed the Stabat Mater. Peter of Compostella is supposed to have been the author of the Salve Regina and the Alma Redemptoris. The universal adoption of the Roman Breviary, which is acknowledged to have been the slow and successive product of time, experience, piety, and the study of the Scriptures, was one of the happy effects, resulting in the middle ages, from the power of the Holy See, aided by the zeal of the nations, and the desire of devout kings. "We should do all things that the Lord has ordained with order," says St. Clemens, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. "He has wished that we should render him certain duties at certain hours; he has also determined certain places and certain persons, where and by whom his worship should be celebrated: he has assigned to the sovereign pontiff his functions, to priests the place where they should offer the sacrifice, and to the Levites all the detail of their ministry." It was not, however, possible, in the first ages, to prevent the introduction of some diversity of customs in the celebration of the Divine offices; but this was finally obviated by the express and positive enactment of the Church. "Conformity and unity in the things which relate to the glory of God, must always be preserved in the Catholic Church," says the Bull of Clement VIII., "being founded under one head, Christ our Lord, and subject to his vicar on earth. Especially must that uniformity be maintained for ever in the prayers, and by adhering to what is contained in the Roman Breviary, that in the Church diffused throughout the whole world, God may be always praised and invoked by the faithful of Christ, in one and the same order of prayers and song."† Walafrid Strabo, who lived under Louis-le-Debonnaire, attests, that in almost all the Churches of the Latins, the customs, ritual, and liturgy of Rome prevailed, on account of the privilege of the Roman See, and the wisdom of its practices. He wrote thus at a period long before the Church had made a law to enforce this uniformity; which proves the Catholic tendency which, in all times and in all things, obliges every Church to gravitate towards Rome.

\* Pasquier Recherche de la France, lib. vii.

† Bullarium, Clemens VIII. Bulla, Cum in Ecclesia.

Any departure, however slight, or capable of defence, from the general practice of the Church, was felt as an injury by holy men. St. Bernard supplied an instance, on his first arrival at Paraclet, which he reached as they were sounding the bell for vespers. He went, therefore, straight into the Church; but he was shocked on hearing the superior, when repeating aloud the paternoster, use the word *panem superstantialem*, instead of *quotidianum*. This sounded ill in his ears as a novelty. When he came to speak to Heloisa respecting it, she proceeded indeed, with the utmost modesty and grace, to prove, by Greek and Hebrew, by Scripture and the Fathers, that this was the proper reading. Abeillard too, hearing of what had passed, wrote a learned letter to St. Bernard, in which he shows that St. Matthew, who gives the whole prayer, and who had heard it from Jesus Christ, uses this word; whereas St. Luke only gives a part of it, and he had only heard it from St. Paul. Moreover he showed that the Greek Church follows in this point St. Matthew, who wrote in Hebrew, in preference to St. Luke, though he wrote in Greek. Notwithstanding these arguments, St. Bernard adhered to his first opinion, that it would have been better to have followed the common universal usage of the Church.

Charlemagne lent his assistance to carry into effect the great object of the ecclesiastical rulers, to maintain one universal liturgy among the nations of Christendom:—"Ut non esset dispar ordo psallendi, quibus erat compar ardor credendi:"—that those who were united by the sacred reading of one holy law, might be united also in the venerable tradition of intonation; and that the different celebrations of offices might not separate those whom the pious devotion of one faith had joined together.\* When therefore Spain, in the eleventh century, abandoned its Mozarabic ritual to embrace that of Rome, that grand system of universality, which gave such an inspiring authority to the ritual of the Catholic Church, received its full and final development. So early indeed as in the ninth century, Walafrid Strabo regarded this work as nearly terminated, and he demonstrated its advantages and indispensable necessity by the same arguments as those used by theologians of modern times.† The Council of Trent, in its twenty-fifth session, referred to the care of the Roman Pontiff the great work of the correction and definitive publication of the Breviary and Missal. Thanks to this master piece of religious wisdom, the Catholic was a stranger in no land. Wherever he travelled, he heard the children of the Church sing the same holy chants of Rome—the mother and mistress of Christians—and the sublime tones which rose around the cross of the desert, were the same as filled the domes of the metropolis of the Christian world.

It need hardly be remarked, that although the final adoption of a uniform course of psalmody and reading was the gradual work of time, the more awful mysteries which involved the divine fulfilment of the ancient prophecy, were in all ages and throughout the whole world, substantially the same. The word *Missa*, or *Mass*, though, like the term *Trinity*, not in Scripture, is of great antiquity, and, at least in the fourth

---

\* Caroli Magni contra Synod. Græcor. de Imaginib. lib. i.

† De Rebus Ecclesiastic. c. 25.



century, it was used to designate the unbloody sacrifice of the altar, as appears from St. Ambrose\* and St. Augustin.†

The Greek word λειτουργέω, which is derived from a word signifying public, is never used by St. Luke excepting in the sense of sacrifice, as is proved from his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. In the classic poets it is used to express any public function;‡ and in Scripture it nowhere signifies prayer. The function, or ministry, which by this term the Apostles are said to have discharged, was therefore that of the eucharistic sacrifice. The canon of the mass has received indeed some alterations since the times of the Apostles; for in the year 440, the great St. Leo added four words to it; and about the year 590, Pope St. Gregory some few others; but nothing was changed without the greatest precautions. Thus, not one saint is named who was not dead a long time before the year 400; after which, nothing almost was added. The Apostles are named in an order different from the present, which dates from the time of St. Jerome, who named them as they are now generally placed, which is another remarkable evidence of the antiquity of the ritual. Indeed, the smallest ceremonies pertaining to it may be traced to the most remote period, as in the instance recorded by St. Jerome, who says, that “in all the churches throughout the East, when the Gospel is read, there are lights burning, though the sun may shine at the time.”|| We know that in the second century, in the time of St. Evaristus, it was the custom to keep holy water even in private houses; in which, during the first ages, were practised all those devotional exercises of Christian worship, which had connection with art and symbolism:§ and in short, as a late writer observes, “we can trace, through every part of the office, some doctrine or observance of the primitive times, and may admire the watchful fidelity with which tradition has handed down every little ceremony connected with the first ages of our faith.”

Leaving, therefore, the historical question, let us proceed to consider the ecclesiastical offices in relation to our threefold faculty of perception, as constituted for estimating beauty, justice, and truth—the development of which, certain philosophers of late have attempted to express by the term æsthetics; perhaps, indeed, without having sufficiently examined whether the particular combination of ideas really existed, for which they sought to discover a scientific word.

Ere we advance, however, it will be well to examine whether there be any ground of justice in the accusation so commonly brought against the middle ages, as expressed by Milton, who affirms, that “during their course the far greater part of men deemed in outward rites and specious forms religion satisfied, and that works of faith were rarely found.” A sentence evidently expressing the conviction of many whom we still behold entering our churches, and with gloom beholding the rites that sanctify the pile, darting at the altar and the vested priest looks of such suspicion, that one might conclude they were imbued with the opinion of Cecilius the philosopher, mentioned by Minutius Felix,

\* In Epist. ad Marcellin. Soror.

† Æschyl. Eumenid. 363.

‡ Rheinwald die Kirchliche Archæologie, 395.

Vol. II.—44

† Serm. xci. de Tempore.

|| Advers. Vigilant.

who says that the Christians in their assemblies lick the blood of a slain child covered with flour, and distribute its limbs. For the present it will be sufficient to hear the unpremeditated testimony of the men accused: for if their adversaries refuse such evidence, and continue to ascribe opinions to them which they disowned with every expression of abhorrence, ignorance will be no cloak to malice.

Lewis of Granada, then, that eloquent Spanish friar, expressly says, that "all the sacred ceremonies, and other external works of virtue, which are not the least part of Christian perfection, are commended chiefly on this account, that they greatly assist us to attain to internal beauty and elegance of mind—that is, to a fuller knowledge of the Divinity, to hope, to love, to fear, and veneration of the Divine Majesty."\* Ceremony is derived from the ancient word *cerus*, signifying holy, which also gave rise to the Latin term for men of an exalted station, as if the primal wisdom discernible in the formation of languages, had chosen in this manner to indicate that superior sanctity ought to be their characteristic. "In no name of religion," says St. Augustin, "can men be collected, unless the bond of certain signs, as if of visible sacraments, should unite them together:"† from which Duns Scotus would infer, that even under the law of nature there must have been ceremonies divinely instituted; ‡ for though they are nothing in themselves, they are yet acts of exterior religion, by which the mind is excited to the veneration of holy things, and elevated to heavenly objects; and by them piety is nourished, charity enkindled, faith increased, the worship of God adorned, and religion maintained. The simple are thus instructed, and the true faithful kept distinct from false Christians. Christ himself hardly ever performed a miracle without using some ceremony, as when he made damp clay, and stretched out his hand to touch, and wrote upon the ground. The body should pay its homage as well as the soul. "*Cor meum et caro mea exultaverunt in Deum vivum.*"|| Under the three elements of religion, we find doctrinal learning rather than knowledge, the religion of the heart, as a thing of customary expression, and the symbolic religion of worship; which last remains the peculiarly positive religious object, and as Fries observes, "the most important in the formation of the popular life; for certainly positive religion is the most living and powerful master and instructor of the people, their perception and emotions arising from the view of the world constituting their deepest and strongest idea."§

But the clergy were most careful, as Cardinal Bona shows, to teach the people that piety did not consist in any exterior observances, though these were wisely and holily ordained by the Fathers.\*\* The Catholic Church abhors that superstitious belief in the theurgical power of ceremonies, and in their meriting an eternal recompence, which some late writers ascribe to her; but she knew, as the author of *Theologia Germanica* says, that "by means of these rites and institutions many men are enticed and converted to truth, who otherwise could not be corrected; and indeed, that few men come to truth who did not first receive these in-

\* Ludovic. Granatensis de Omnibus Sanctis, Concio. ii.

† Cont. Faustum. lib. xix. c. 11.

‡ In lib. iv. Sent. Dist. i. 9. 7.

|| Ps. lxxxiii.

§ Religios Philosophie, 177.

\*\* De divina Psal. 499.

stitutions and rites, and exercise themselves in them, while they knew nothing else. Therefore laws, precepts, institutions and rites, in submissive spirituality or in spiritual poverty, are never despised or condemned, any more than the men who use them, who otherwise would become more inordinate, and worse than dogs or other brutes.”\*

The extraordinary, and to many, unaccountable stupidity of the peasants, in countries from which the ceremonies of faith have been withdrawn, is only the natural consequence of their having been deprived of the religious worship, and the exercises of prayer and meditation connected with it. It is religion acting through this medium which civilizes and spiritualizes men. These poor creatures grow up without any idea excepting what is suggested by mere natural and animal wants. “Experience teaches us,” says La Hogue, “that by far the greatest portion of men can have no doctrine and precepts of manners, unless by means of the public worship of religion: so that whenever the sacred rites which used to be publicly and solemnly celebrated are intermitted or abolished, it follows of necessity, that the rustic multitude and the unlearned people should relapse into the most foul barbarism, and into the most supine ignorance of the duties of nature and of society.”† What some men call Apostolic simplicity, is more acutely noted down by others as Calvinistical folly. In our age, that Protestant simplicity, of which some writers speak in admiration, is only a philosophic term for getting rid of God without forfeiting appearances; far more designed for excluding his image from appearing intellectually in the detail of life, than for banishing it in form and symbol from those cold temples, in which no hallowed flame ascends, and where sanctity at one entrance is quite shut out. The heart of man knows of no such simplicity. If it loves God, it must love to refer all things to him, and to worship him with all the beauty of holiness, in spirit and in truth. The sophists who now babble most in praise of simplicity in public worship, are men who seem to think it a great thing if they profess a mere belief in the existence of a God as a sublime abstraction: and as for those who admire it on religious grounds, if they were to study the work of Cardinal Bona on the Discernment of Spirits, methinks they would find other matters for their thoughts besides the danger to which Catholics are exposed of mistaking the operations of nature or of Satan for those of grace.‡ In fact, as theologians observe, “External is the natural and necessary appendix to internal worship; for we are so constituted by nature, that all the sentiments of our soul break forth to the exterior, and become painted in the demeanour of the whole body; insomuch, that it is scarcely possible to love God sincerely with all the heart, and not break forth in his praise, and manifest the intimate sense of divine charity by external signs. Why do men love ceremony in religion? It is because they wish to enjoy life in all the faculties and divisions of their nature. To live is to be happy: and the highest life is that which is spiritual or divine. Therefore we desire that in that life all our perception should participate, and consequently we wish that our senses, as well as our reason, should be excited by a divine object. Even the disposition of

\* Cap. 24.

† Tractatus de Religione, cap. 11, prop. 2.

‡ De Discretionem Spirituum, cap. 12.



body in relation to things external, resulting from a habit of devotion, instead of being a scandal to a profound thinker, may only remind him of what Malebranche says, 'that every thing which passes mechanically within us, is worthy of the wisdom of our Maker.'\* Besides, man being constituted of a body and a soul, it is just that the body, with its various abilities, which are so many gifts of God, should come forward on the side of religion. Further, it is the nature of man to need external assistance to enable him to rise to the meditation of divine things; therefore internal piety requires to be excited and nourished by ceremonies, and certain sensible signs. Moreover, every man ought to be religious and pious, not only so as to be conscious within himself that he worships God, but also that he should promote the piety and instruction of the men with whom he lives, and of those who are entrusted to his care; and this cannot be done unless we profess, by some external sign, the intimate sense of religion with which we are animated."†

In the ceremonial and discipline of the Church, there was no part without its use. That which might seem the most trifling, had its proper object, and served, in some way or other, to promote habits of humility, order, patience, recollection, and religion, so as to build up the Catholic character. Hence, the Fathers of the Council of Trent pronounce an anathema against all who should say, that the received and approved rites of the Catholic Church may be despised or omitted, "ad libitum," by the priests, or may be changed by any pastors of the Churches.‡ A most important and incalculably beneficial sentence—which delivers Catholic piety from being at the mercy of weak, ignorant, though perhaps well meaning men, who, in proportion to their weakness and ignorance, are generally vain of being reformers or modifiers of ancient things.

These approved ceremonies of the Church are called, by Hugo de St. Victor, Sacraments of Devotion. He divides them into three classes—the first consisting in things, such as the aspersion of water, the reception of ashes, the benediction of palms and tapers; the second in actions, as the sign of the cross, the exsufflations, the extension of hands, genuflexions; and the third in words, as the invocation of the blessed Trinity, and that of Deus in adjutorium—for words themselves are sometimes sacraments.||

There would be no end of following theologians in remarking all the uses of these external rites to imprint the mysteries of our faith on the understanding. They show that, from the exorcisms and insufflations used in baptism, it was easier to understand than the unlearned would have found it from the Scriptures, that children are born under the yoke of the demon, and infected with original sin: that, in like manner, the ashes strewed on the heads of men at the beginning of Lent, teach them, in a most forcible manner, the vanity of all earthly things, and that, in holy week, the solemn ceremonies of the Church recall and imprint a knowledge of the mysteries of human redemption. Certain

\* Recherche de la Verité, lib. v.

† De la Hogue Tractat. de Religione, cap. 2, prop. 1.

‡ Sess. vii. Can. 13.

§ Hugo de St. Victor, Eruditiones Theologicæ de Sacramentis, lib. ii. pars ix. 1.

it is that the Catholic ceremonies, besides answering these ends, conduce, in all ages, to the defence of the faith against innovaters, as when St. Augustin drew an invincible argument from the use of exorcisms in baptism against the error of the Pelagians.\*

We are told incessantly, with shouts of defiance, that the rites of the Catholic Church addressed themselves to the imagination; as if, in the estimation of sound philosophy, it were an egregious offence to address the imagination, which is one of the powers of the soul, given to vivify and govern the interior man. But will not reason admit, that those persons ought chiefly to be protected who are chiefly in danger? And who are so much exposed to the wiles of the ancient enemy as persons to whose minds the greatest variety of images are continually presenting themselves? Who so liable to sundry distractions and temptations, against purity, against charity, against faith? Who so likely to be terrified at the approach of death, and recalled to the world by images of flesh and blood, by the wretched phantoms of vanity and sin? Assuredly it is a greater marvel to see a man of much imagination hold fast his faith, than to see it kept by one who is more under the control of unimpassioned and abstract reason.

As for the charge of captivating the understanding by means of ceremonies, the men who produce it should learn from Malebranche, that their senses are not so corrupted as they imagine, but that it is the more interior part of their soul, their liberty, which is corrupted; that it is not their senses which deceive them, but that it is their will which deceives them by its rash judgments.† If, however, the church had ordained her ceremonies with a sole view to gratify the imagination, there might be some grounds for censure, even in reference to the beauties of poetry and art: because, although, in every excitement to spiritual activity, there is indeed a kind of pleasure, still emotion, as such, is not beautiful; but these rites are addressed not alone to the imagination; they are no less so to the affections and to the understanding of the instructed people. Can one suppose that no permanent moral change was wrought in the mind by the mere act of slowly and deliberately tracing the sign of the cross on the forehead, on the lips, and on the heart, when the gospel is announced in the divine mysteries? Can one suppose that the man accustomed to this practice is as likely to blush at the cross in society, and to show vile submission to worldly respect, as another who knows of no such practice? At the end of each lesson in the choral office, the reader turns to the altar saying, *Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis*, because, as holy writers say, even that work of reading cannot be without some fault, since, if he read well, the mind is tempted with elation, and if ill, confusion follows; therefore, he who reads, stands always in need of the mercy of God, lest a work, in itself good, should be either corrupted by pride or rendered ineffectual by false shame.‡ Can it be thought that to one instructed in this meaning, the mere ceremony does not incline him to humility, and warn him to beware how he hears as well as reads the divine word? And what, after all, are the first impressions created by the whole ritual? “Were I to

\* De la Hogue, de Sacramentis in Genere, cap. 7, prop. 2.

† De la Recherche de la Verité, i.

‡ Bona, de divina Psalmodia, 389.

enter one of their churches now," says a writer of the last century, "it would be apt to put me in mind of what St. John tells us he saw once in a vision. 'Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer: and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.' These lighted altars naturally made me think of what the good old Simeon said of Christ, 'A light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.'"

Similar are the sentiments expressed by the celebrated Lavater on finding himself in a catholic church. "He doth not know thee, O Jesus Christ, who dishonoureth even thy shadow? I honour all things," continues this philosopher, "where I find the intention of honouring thee. I will love them because of thee. I will love them provided I find the least thing which makes me remember thee! What then do I behold here? What do I hear in this place? Does nothing under these majestic vaults speak to me of thee? This cross, this golden image, is it not made for thy honour? The censer which waves round the priest, the gloria sung in choirs, the peaceful light of the perpetual lamp, these lighted tapers, all is done for thee! Why is the Host elevated, if it be not to honour thee, O Jesus Christ, who art dead for love of us? because it is no more, and thou art it, the believing church bends the knee. It is in thy honour alone that these children, early instructed, make the sign of the cross, that their tongues sing thy praise, and that they strike their breasts thrice with their little hands. It is for the love of thee, O Jesus Christ, that one kisses the spot which bears thy adorable blood; for thee, the child who serves, sounds the little bell, and does all that he does. The riches collected from distant countries, the magnificence of chasubles, all that has relation to thee. Why are the walls and the high altar of marble clothed with verdant tapestry on the day of the blessed sacrament? For whom do they make a road of flowers? For whom are these banners embroidered? When the Ave Maria sounds, is it not for thee? Matins, vespers, prime and nones, are they not consecrated to thee? These bells within a thousand towers, purchased with the gold of whole cities, do they not bear thy image cast in the very mould? Is it not for thee that they send forth their solemn tone? It is under thy protection, O Jesus Christ, that every man places himself who loves solitude, chastity, and poverty. Without thee, the orders of St. Benedict and of St. Bernard would not have been founded. The cloister, the tonsure, the breviary, and the chaplet, render testimony of thee. O delightful rapture, Jesu Christ, for thy disciple to trace the marks of thy finger where the eyes of the world see them not! O joy ineffable for souls devoted to thee, to behold in caves and on rocks, in every crucifix placed upon hills and on the highways, thy seal and that of thy love! Who will not rejoice in the honours of which thou art the object and the soul? Who will not shed tears in hearing the words, 'Jesus Christ be praised?' O the hypocrite who knoweth that name and answereth not with joy, amen. Who saith not with an intense transport, Jesus be blessed for eternity! for eternity!"\*

---

\* Empfindungen eines Protestantin in einer Katholischen Kirche.



Another famed objection to the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic church, was grounded on the supposed discovery that certain forms of expression adopted in them had been used by the ancients in their false religions; and this was proclaimed with a vociferation of exulting triumph by the very sophists who were themselves inclined to revive the spirit and doctrines of the heathen philosophy. Polydore Virgil seems to have been so pleased with what he had written on this point, that, although he continued to profess himself a Catholic, as to human eye, he really became one in heart at his death, yet, he looked on with the greatest apparent indifference while England was separating herself from the communion of the faithful. These men, so proudly learned, became fools, losing by pride what they gained by curiosity. To the profound thinkers of the ages of faith, there would have been nothing novel or startling in the proposition itself. Tertullian had shown that the ceremonies of the heathens, which resembled those of the Catholic church, had been transferred from the divine law to the worship of superstition,\* and Gregory Nyssensis, and Theodoret had affirmed that even some may have been wisely borrowed from them by the holy Fathers, and employed to the worship of the true God.† The advantage of adopting and sanctifying some Pagan customs, was stated acutely in the following words by the venerable Bede. “*Pertinaci Paganismo mutatione subventum est, quum rei in totum sublatio potius irritasset.*”

The conduct of the Church in adopting such ceremonies, was, in fact, only conformable to that of the Deity himself; for in his first covenant with Abraham he established circumcision as a most solemn and religious rite, yet this was in use among the heathens as a religious rite long before the time of Abraham, as is proved by Michaelis. To use the types or figures of a future Messiah in the Christian Church, would no doubt have been deemed inconsistent and monstrous, but it was impossible to infer that there was no one law, no one ceremony in the Jewish ritual, that the Christian Church could adopt. You have borrowed your ceremonies from the Pagans, said the modern heathen; but one might have thought that the answer immediately sent forth would have left Middleton without any disciple bold enough to repeat his calumny.‡ Granting all that he would have granted, where could he find a prohibition in the law of Christians, from sanctifying every thing by prayer? While, on the other hand, with what victorious power might not the followers of Christian antiquity have advanced on their side, and proved that the very men who thus accused them were themselves guilty of having borrowed, not the ceremonies, which of themselves were nothing in the world, but the very spirit, sentiments, and language of the Pagans? For let us consider how stood the two divisions of men opposed under these banners. The one were possessed of doctrines and manners perfectly unlike those of the ancient world, though it is true, some of the early sages, in availing themselves of the great primitive traditions of the human race, had said many things that seemed to express the beauty and wisdom of the Catholic philosophy; but in the others no

---

\* De Præscript. cap. 40.

† Greg. Nyss. in vita Thaumatis. Theodoret. lib. viii. de Cur. Græc. Affect.

‡ A Popish Pagan, the fiction of a Protestant Heathen. London, 1743.

eye could discern any opposition to the spirit and habits of the heathen lore. We can pass from the classic authors of antiquity, and even from the profane poets, to their great writers, without observing any sudden transition or change. Their moralists rise no higher than the flight of Cicero or Seneca. Their views of human character differ in no respect from the representations given by Euripides, Plautus or Terence. We find in none of their writers those sentiments and features which were peculiar to the Gospel, which rendered it in the eyes of Pliny and Tacitus, an execrable superstition. Certainly their adamantine authors, as they styled each other, would have given no offence had they appealed to the judgment of the forum or the Areopagus.

But now dismissing these unworthy objections as fitting only in the men who cherish them, let us proceed to contemplate in quiet meditation the beauty and wisdom of the solemn offices, which were observed within the holy precincts of the Catholic Church; and if Xenophon saith truly, that there is nothing among men so useful and so beautiful as order,\* well may admiration be awakened at the memory of them: planet-like in their movement, constant in their duration, universal in their observance, so that holy writers of the middle ages, like St. Columban, St. Boniface, and St. Gregory, of Tours, could apply no other epithet to them, but "that course divine,"—universal, I say, and like the great operations of nature, extended over every part of the earth, for by means of the monastic institutions, these celestial sounds were as familiar to the desert as to the city; they were heard in the solemn depth of forests, on the wildest mountain pass, and they were borne by howling winds, from rock to rock, along with the shriek of sea-birds over the ocean wave.

Nature herself seems to point out the distinction of hours. The Pythagoreans used to take morning walks alone in places of silence and repose, where were temples and groves, and other objects proper for acting upon the mind. They would not speak to any one until they had composed their minds rightly in solitude and contemplation; for they esteemed it a turbulent thing to go amongst the crowd immediately after rising from sleep. Therefore, they always observed this matutinal walk, especially in temples, where they could be found, or if not, in such places as most nearly resembled them. In the evening they used to resume their walk, not alone, but two or three together, that they might repeat what they had learned in the day, and recall what they had done, and so exercise their memory.†

Chrysippus with Seneca says, that the Hours are sisters of the Graces, but elder in birth. Homer, in his hymns, calls the Hours wise, and Orpheus styled them chaste, and beautiful, and innocent. These expressions in their application are unintelligible to one who has only in mind a mode of employing the hours, like that of the degenerate times described by Martial, which consists in devoting the first to salutations and compliments, the middle to litigation, to business of various kinds, or to entertainment, and the last to banqueting and repose;‡ but in what justice do they seem founded to the Christian ear, when remembrance suggests their employment by the Church and by Catholic men in ages of faith! Good men and holy might sometimes be dismayed at observ-

---

\* *Œconom.* cap. 8. † *Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita*, cap. 21. ‡ *Lib. iv. Epig.* 8.

ing that they occasionally felt wearied internally even by the operation of the works of God, if they had not been accustomed to receive and remark with deep attention the councils and encouragements of the Church, to whose offices we are in general far from sufficiently applying for a solution to difficulties in the study of philosophy. The love of variety, arising from a sense of our own infinity, which implies constant renovation, and development, is not a vain or criminal propensity, since it is part of our nature which God hath made; and the Holy Ghost foreseeing that the spectacle and course of the external world might occasionally prove wearisome to human minds, prompted the Church to add in grateful praise of the eternal Founder of things who ruleth night and day, those remarkable lines:

“Et temporum das tempora,  
Ut alleves fastidium.”

St. Athanasius observes, that from the creation of the world until Christ, the day preceded the night, as we read in Scripture; but from the coming of Christ, the night precedes the day; and thus we begin to celebrate the day solemnly from the vespers of the preceding day. This was typical to show how from light men were to decline to darkness, from God to errors and idolatry; but from the time that the sun of justice, Christ, rose upon us, we are brought out of darkness into the light of divine faith.\* The monks of Mount Athos consider the day to begin from midnight, because it was then that the resurrection of our Lord took place; and in allusion to this the Church exclaims, “O vere beata nox quæ sola meruit scire tempus et horam, in qua Christus ab inferis resurrexit,” as if even the very time itself were endowed with intelligence, and more than in poetic figure blessed. The holy Fathers are full of praises of the night generally. The night, say they, is innocent, though it is the time of committing crimes, for the mind ought to be accused, not the time. St. Jerome says, “it is good to meditate during the day, but nocturnal meditation is still better; for in the day various necessities interpose, and cares and occupations distract the mind, but the night is the time of peace and quietness, most favourable for prayer and watching.”† Therefore, St. Chrysostom says, “the night is not made for us to pass the whole of it in sleeping and repose. Witness these workmen, these sailors, and merchants. The Church of God rises at midnight. Rise thou, also, and observe the choir of the stars, the profound silence, the great quiet, which of itself can charm the passions of a troubled heart. Be amazed at the wonderful dispensation of thy God. Then the mind is purer, lighter, more subtle. This darkness and silence are enough to inspire it with compunction; but if you behold the heavens studded, as it were, with innumerable eyes, you will take delight in admiring the wisdom of the Creator. God is moved by nocturnal prayers, if you make the time of repose that of penitence.”‡ Speaking of the constant prayer and psalmody of the perfect Christian, Clemens Alexandrinus adds, “ἀλλὰ καὶ νύκτωρ εὐχαὶ πάνιν.” “The day,” says Tertullian, “dies in the night, and is buried in darkness. The

\* Athan. in 99, Sac. Script. 54. Gen. i. 3.

† Ep. 36, De Observ. Vigilium, tom. iv.

VOL. II.—45

‡ Hom. 26, in Act. Apost.



honour of the world is shrouded, and all substance is enveloped in blackness. All things are silent and amazed. Every where are justice and rest. Thus nature mourns for the departed light.”\* St. Chrysostom, who had not foreseen what we now behold, in enumerating the beneficent works of God, takes especial notice of the merciful ordination of night to oblige men to suspend their labours who might otherwise be induced by avarice to deprive themselves of necessary repose. It is night when the woods and the wild seas rest. “Behold,” he exclaims, “what tranquillity, what profound silence! Every thing in nature is hushed, every thing is in repose, even beasts and monsters possess quiet in sleep’s calm bliss: there is an end also of complaint, and of those groans which proceed from the miseries of human life. The night is like a favourable port in which all men forget the storms with which they were agitated during the day.”† There is an end of the combats of ambition. The friendly night, as Æschylus sings, wide over heaven’s star-spangled fields, holdeth her awful reign,‡ and even the intemperate passions of the heroic world professed submission to its sway.

νύξ δ' ἡδὴ τελέθει· ἀγαδὸν καὶ νυκτὶ πιδέσθαι.||

“Fatigued by the labours of the day, is it not,” asks St. Cyrill of Alexandria, “through favour of the night that we recover the vigour which we had lost? What is more favourable than the night to promote our advance in wisdom? It is the time of those holy thoughts which raise our souls towards the Author of all good; it is then that we can devote ourselves more freely to reading and to the meditations of the divine oracles. Is it not during the night that we find in our soul a greater ardour for prayer, and in our voice more religious sounds to chant the sacred canticles? At what time does the remembrance of our sins present itself to us with the greatest force? Is it not during the night?”

In the last book we remarked how familiar were men with death, and here we see in their language abounding in solemn invocations, how they sympathised also with black night, the mother, not of the furies, but of peaceful and holy thoughts. “It seems to me,” says Clemens of Alexandria, “that the night was called ‘εὐφρόνη,’ because at that time the soul is at rest from the senses, and partakes more of wisdom. On that account the mysteries are chiefly celebrated at night, and they signify the separation of the soul from the body.”§ Eustathius writing on the Iliad, cites the ancient proverb which ascribes counsel to the night, to which Æschylus seems to subscribe, saying, that during the day mortals are blind.\*\* In the arrangement of the ecclesiastical office these considerations have not been overlooked, for in the office of the night we may observe, that the lessons read are longer than those read in the day; because, as Cardinal Bona says, the night is for contemplation, the day for action.†† It appears from Tertullian, Athenagoras, Arnobius, Justin, and Minutius Felix, that the Christians were calumniated by the heathens on account of their nocturnal psalmody and vigils. They were

\* Tertull. de Resur. Carnis, cap. 12.

† Agamem.

\*\* Eumenid. 105.

|| Hom. Il. vii. 282.

† On Compunction, lib. ii. cap. 5.

§ Stromat. lib. iv. c. 22.

†† De div. Psal.

called a people loving darkness, and addicted to impious rites. The Christians might, indeed, have referred them to their own poets, who speak of the sacred night,\* to Orpheus, who celebrated the night in noble hymns, to Cicero, who praises the nightly vigil consecrated to the gods,† to Plato, who recommends the employing part of the night in transacting public business, and the affairs of domestic economy, for the reason that much sleep is injurious to the concerns of both body and soul.‡ But the examples of the Old Testament supplied them with a sufficient authority, for there they read that Abraham rose up by night with his son to ascend the mountain and obey the voice of God; that it was by night when Jacob desired to see the mysterious ladder, and struggling with the angel till morning, received a benediction; that by night the Lord led the children of Israel out of Egypt; that Samuel the prophet prayed all night to the Lord; that Judith went out by night and prayed; that the royal David rose at midnight to confess to the Lord, and invited others to lift up their hands by night and to bless the Lord. "The devotion of vigils," says Nicetius, "has always been known to the saints. Isaiah cried, '*De nocte vigilat spiritus meus ad te, Deus.*' David says, '*memor fui nocte nominis tui, Domine.*' Anna, the widow, departed not from the temple day and night; the holy shepherds too were keeping watch when they beheld the vision of angels in the sky; and the Saviour himself repeatedly reminds us of the need of watching by night, and taught us by his example, and admonished Peter in the time of the passion, '*non potuistis una hora vigilare mecum? Vigilate et orate;*' words sufficient to awaken men from the sleep of death. The blessed apostles kept vigils. St. Peter in prison, and the disciples who were assembled in the house of Mary, and Paul and Silas. As for the utility of vigils, I must now speak," continues this holy bishop, "although this can be more easily felt by the exercise than described by the words of a narrator; for it is by tasting that we see how sweet is the Lord. A good thing, indeed, is meditation by day; a good thing is prayer; but much more grateful and efficacious is nocturnal meditation; because in the day various necessities disturb us, occupation deadens the mind, multiplied cares distract the sense; but the night is secret; the night is quiet and opportune for prayer, and fitting those that watch; know, therefore, that vigils are agreeable to God."§ "The hour of midnight," says St. Basil, "the hour of repose and silence, is the most favourable to the pure operations of the soul. The sight and the hearing receive then no impression from external things, the soul is then alone; it is disengaged from all earthly things; it is wholly occupied with God. During these precious moments of the night, the memory of sins presents itself most forcibly to her."§ It is then that she discerns the rapid flight of life; while every thing else is at rest, the strides of death are more distinctly heard. The whole world seems abbreviated before her, as it did to St. Benedict in the night, and she may almost behold herself already entering upon the eternal world. Ah, well may the night seem solemn!

These views may appear ungrounded and paradoxical to the present

\* Eurip. Ion. 85.

† De Legibus, lib. ii.

‡ Ib. lib. vii.

§ Nicetius Epis. de Vigilis Servorum Dei, Apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. iii. § Id.

race of men; for alas! who now is permitted to taste the sanctified night of Christians, or even the Ambrosian night of Homer? Dead both to grace and nature, if men do not, like some of the ancients, devote the night to the rites of Bacchus,\* it is made the time of all others in which, as if they studied purposely to contradict all that the holy Fathers have ever written, they least think of wisdom or of God, and thus the gloom of moral darkness is added to the obscurity of nature. To Adam after his fall, the natural night seemed full of horrors:

——— “With black air  
Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom,  
Which to his evil conscience represented  
All things with double terror.”

But during the middle ages, the night continued to appear as it did to the primitive Christians. “The night time is often favourable to devotion,” says Thomas à Kempis, “and of no small assistance to sacred meditations.”† If we reflect on the observation of Quinctilian, who remarked that when sleep was intermitted, thought was assisted by the very darkness of the night,‡ we shall have reason to expect that the people of the middle ages who so loved vigils, would be found upon investigation to have been eminently that thinking people, which the moderns are so fond of being considered. “The nights are dearer and more useful to me than the days,” says the Abbot Peter, of St. Remi, in a letter to Berneredus, Abbot of St. Crispin. “My occupations by day hurry me away violently and fraudulently from myself, but the winter nights, by their length, confer on me a double benefit; for they give rest to my body, and they renew my spirits. They give liberty to revisit celestial things, and to enquire into their secrets, and also to be remindful of my friends.”|| Lucas, Archbishop of Cosenza, in the thirteenth century, used also to pass the night in writing, “yet,” says the writer of his life, who lived with him, “to the conventual vigils in the Church he would always hasten, humbly singing and watching with the brethren.”§ Cardinal Bona observes, that the heavy and continued sleep of worldly people is as much opposed to health of body as to philosophy, according to the judgment of Aristotle,\*\* of Hippocrates,†† and of Avicenna. Then in alluding to the nocturnal vigils, he exclaims, “O si scirent homines quam sanctæ, quam gratæ Deo, quam salutare ecclesiastici, sed et fideles singuli, simul in unum dives et pauper, noctem verterent in diem nocturnis precibus summo studio insistentes.”‡‡ St. Bernard shows how the night is peculiarly favourable for prayer. “When sleep involves the world in profound silence, then,” saith he, “prayer will be purer and freer. How securely does it then ascend to God, the sole arbiter, and to the holy angel who is ready to present it on the supernal altar! How grateful is such prayer! How serene! and uninterrupted by any sound! How clear from all dust of terrene solicitude; exempt from all praise or flattery of mortal beholders! ‘O insignem nocturni temporis prærogativam! O sacras noctes omni luce

\* Oppian de Venat. lib. i. 25.

|| Petri Cellens. Epist. lib. v. 1.

\*\* In Œconomicis.

† Sermonum iii. 11.

‡ Lib. x. 6.

§ Italia Sacra, tom. ix. 206.

‡‡ 2 Aph. 3.

‡‡ De divina Psalmodia, 122.



splendidiore!' " Not now devoted to Thessalian arts, but conscious of angelic light:

"O nox purpureo splendidior die,  
O nox deliciis omnibus affluens."†

The heretics, beginning with Vigilantius, whom St. Jerome, on that account, calls the sleeper, condemned the nocturnal vigils and psalmody. Polidore Virgil, generally a rash and vain writer, affirms that they were always held in suspicion on account of the danger of immorality; but such an error, says Cardinal Bona, does not deserve to be confuted. In the third century, under Marcellus, it was, indeed, forbidden to keep vigils in the cemeteries, in those low regions where sad night hangs round the drowsy vaults, and where moist vapours steep the dull brows of those whose limbs are laid to rest, but no where is it written that the vigils in churches were condemned by the ancients. St. Philip Neri was even accustomed to pass the night frequently in the cemetery of St. Callistus on the Appian way.‡ St. Romuald had such a horror of sleep after vigils, that if any one confessed to him that he had indulged in it, he would not allow him that day to celebrate mass.¶ Crodegand, Bishop of Metz, forbids the canons on pain of excommunication to sleep during the interval between nocturns and the early sacrifice, unless on account of sickness or with leave. The holy Abbot Ælredus, calls that a blessed interval which intervenes after the nocturnal psalmody, until the rising of the sun; for then, he says, the heart is most refreshed with the sweetness of devotion. It is at this hour that celestial visions have been generally imparted to holy men. The rocks and woods of Alvernia were still involved in the solemn gray which precedes the first rosy streaks on the eastern sky, when the winged seraph in living flames descended upon Francis, giving the last signets to his saintly flesh by the fervour which it kindled.—Gilbertus, praising the same interval, exclaims,—“Deus bone! hora illa noctis quàm sine nocte est, quàm nox illa illuminatio in deliciis! Orationes illæ privatim fiunt, sed privata non petunt.” Thus St. Anthony, after passing the night in prayer, when the sun rose in the morning, used to say, that it came to interrupt his peaceful ecstasy. St. Benedict used to pass the night in the upper chamber of a tower which rose above the monastery; and it was there, when all the other brethren were taking rest, that the holy man, while standing at a window on the south side, looking towards Capua, had that vision of the whole world, abbreviated amidst a sudden splendour which exceeded the light of the brightest day.§ Pope St. Leo, when at Rome, used three times every week to walk by night barefooted from the Lateran Palace to St. Peter’s Church, privately, attended by two or three clerks, praying and chaunting psalms.\*\* When St. Odo was a monk at St. Martin’s of Tours, he used in the night to go alone to pray at the sepulchre of the saint, which was at a distance of two miles from the college, and the wolves used to terrify him as he walked thither.†† St. Gregory of Tours relates, that Trojanus, Bishop of Saintes, used to go,

\* Serm. ult. in Cant.

† P. Aringhi Roma Subterranea, p. 239.

§ Chron. Casinensis, S. B. cap. 35.

†† Bibliothec. Cluniac.

‡ Card. Bona, p. 128.

¶ Petr. Damian in Vit. S. Romualdi.

\*\* Chron. S. Mon. Casinensis, lib. ii. 87.

in the darkness of the night, to visit all the holy places which were within the circuit of that city, and attended only by one subdeacon.\* Thus Neemias rose up by night, and a few men with him, and indicated to no one what God had put into his heart that he should do in Jerusalem. Thus did he go out by the gate of the valley by night, and before the fountain of the dragon, and thus did he contemplate the walls of Jerusalem broken down, and its gates consumed with fire. "For," says Hugo of St. Victor, "it is the duty of spiritual doctors to rise up often by night, and whilst other men sleep, to go about investigating the state of the Church, that they may discover how they may correct and raise up the things which have been defiled by sins, and overthrown by the tempests of war."†

These nightly exercises of devotion were practised also by the laity with great assiduity, during the middle ages. One of the most remarkable confraternities of the Church of Paris, was that bearing the date of the year 1205, and entitled "*Confraternitas Beatæ Mariæ Parisiensis surgentium ad Matutinas*," which was composed of pious persons of the city, who used to rise and repair to the church at midnight.‡ It is mentioned in the life of Madame de Maisons,|| that she used to rise constantly at that hour, and repair to the church of St. Eustache, her parish, when they chaunted matins.

This night of the middle ages must be dear to poets. O how solemn sounds the choral song while the nocturnal wind sweeps round the solitary pile! Angels then may be thought to beat their wings against the windows of churches; and sometimes has death seemed to beckon with its finger through them, to give salutary warning to a summoned soul.

The ecclesiastical decrees desired that all the people should come to nocturnal vigils.§ It was, in fact, the practice of the laity, in the middle ages, as in primitive times, to spend the vigils of festivals in the churches, and Drexelius laments its disuse in the wretched times in which he wrote. "Alas!" saith he, "what a progress! We indeed keep many nocturnal vigils; but it is over cups, amidst dancing, and playing at tables."\*\* Mabillon, in his *Itinerary of Germany*, describes certain lanterns at the great gates of the church of the monastery of Luxen, and at that of Bonvaux near Chartres, to guide persons who came in the night to those churches.†† "I remember," says an ancient monk, "that during eight days before the festival of St. Paulinus the Briton, Bishop of Capua, who died in 851, the bells used to sound at vespers, and that, on the vigil of the feast, lights used to burn on the top of the tower."‡‡

Sometimes persons kept vigils in churches throughout the whole night, without any lights burning.|||| The pious Emperor Henry, as often as he visited Rome, used to spend the first night in the Basilica of St. Maria Majora.§§ Drexelius also mentions the devotion of Mary de Enies, who, with one attendant, used every year, and in the depth of winter, to remain during a whole night in the church of our Lady.

\* De Gloria Confessorum, 59.

† Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, tom. i. 1.

§ Ivoius Carnot. Decret. pars vi. c. 259.

†† Iter Germanicum in Vet. Analecta.

|||| S. Greg. Turon. Miracul. lib. i. 5.

† Allegor. in lib. viii. 11.

‡ In 4to. 1657.

\*\* De Jejunio, lib. ii. cap. 6.

‡‡ Italia Sacra, tom. vi. 313.

§§ Jo. Naucl. Gen. 34.

Thus too, on the festival of the blessed martyr of the Brivatensian church, St. Gregory of Tours has occasion to relate, that a devout poor man came there to celebrate it, who having fastened his horse outside, entered the church, and there spent the night motionless, praying with the other people during the whole night, till break of day.\* We read in the decrees of Ives de Chartres, that when a bishop was to hold his synod in a church, "all the persons were to be ejected at the first hour of the day, before the rising of the sun."†

To this discipline there was a remarkable exception in the sacred cave or church in the rocks of Mount Garganum, celebrated throughout the whole world on account of the apparition of St. Michael. For, from the first light till evening psalmody, sacred mysteries and prayers were offered there daily by clergy and people, during which time the doors were never closed; but through fear and reverence for the angelic choir, which was said to be present there during the night, no one was permitted to remain after the last office, when diligent search used to be made in order to expel all persons. In the year 1015, St. Henry the Emperor was received there to hospitality by Ursus, Archbishop of Siponto, when he came for the sake of devotion to visit this church of St. Michael. Passing the brazen gates, which were the gift of princes, and descending into that vast cavern obscure, distilling drops through the solid rock, he joined in the offices which were then solemnly sung before the great altar at the end of the choir, in which is a fountain of most sweet and transparent water. When the office was concluded, and every person commanded to withdraw, the saint indeed begged, and obtained permission, to remain in the church during that night; but this was an especial indulgence, which no one else ever enjoyed: and the subsequent lameness of the holy emperor was attributed, by contemporary writers, to the effects of the vision which was then vouchsafed to him, when, like another Jacob, he endured an angel's touch.‡

The processions of penitents at Rheims, in the year 1575, took place in the night. The Archbishop, Louis de Guise, assisted, walking barefooted along with a numerous confraternity. The litanies, sung with a mournful tone, were often interrupted by the sobs and plaintive cries of the penitents, which produced a most overpowering effect in the silence and horror of the darkness. These pilgrims anticipated, from the aspect of public affairs, the destruction of the Catholic religion in France, and hence their penitential vigil.|| The night's dead silence did well become such sweet complaining sorrow.

It is still a devotion at Rome to go by night to the ancient Basilicas without the walls. One morning, leaving Rome while it was still dark, being three hours before sunrise, as I approached the gate of St. Lorenzo, I saw an extraordinary light moving towards me, which soon assumed the form of crosses of light. Presently I heard the murmur of prayers, and the solemn chaunt of the pilgrim's litany; a vast crowd of persons became half discernible, the men going first and the women following, and the light proceeded from two crosses, borne along, to which lamps were attached. It is impossible to describe the awful impression

\* S. Greg. Turon. Miracul. lib. ii. 21.

† Italia Sacra, tom. vii. 821.

‡ Decret. pars iv. 246.

|| Anquetil, Hist. de Reims, lib. iv. 147.



produced by such a spectacle at that hour, and on such ground! At first I supposed it to be a funeral train, but on inquiry I was told that they were persons returning to Rome, after hearing mass in the basilica of St. Lorenzo, without the walls. It struck me forcibly that here was a faith and thirst worthy of the days of the apostles. The first Christians could not have evinced greater fervour than these poor people, who filled the lonely precincts of the eternal city, at the bitter hour of damp exhalations, with prayers for mercy, with the praises of Christ, and of his blessed mother. At Lucca, there is a holy brotherhood whose members are appointed in turn to sound a bell before dawn at the doors of such of the citizens as are accustomed to assist at the first mass, in order to apprise them of the hour, and light the torch which is to guide them to the Church. In the monastery of St. Apollonia, at Florence, there is a part granted to a confraternity of pious people, who assemble there only during the night. Through the foul womb of night, the hum of hasty passengers, who murmur prayers as they repair to churches, stillly sounds. "There is no rest," says St. Paulinus, "for the multitude who repair to the festival of the blessed Confessor Felix, at Nola."

———"Properant in lucem à nocte, diemque  
Expectare piget, votis avidis mora noctis  
Rumpitur, et noctem flammis funalia vincunt."\*

Even without the interest of a more than ordinary occasion, the watchers who guard the city find them going about it, through the streets and squares, seeking Him whom their souls love. It was so common a practice to go to the church at matins, that the French had an ancient proverb,—“as dangerous as return from matins,”—to express the liability to fall into mischief in the dark from enemies or wolves.† Petrarch writes as follows:—“I rise always at midnight, to sing the praises of God. The silence of the night is best suited to this employment. It is the part of my life when I am most myself, and most delightfully employed. It is a custom I have observed, which has never been interrupted but by sickness, and which I shall ever adhere to.” We find him dating one of his letters from “the most retired corner of the Ambrosian house at Milan,” under that light, and at the same hour, in which formerly the living Light arose upon the earth to enlighten men.”—Nicholas Von der Flue, when father of a family at Saxeln, used to retire to rest with his household; but as soon as they were asleep, he would rise from his bed, leave his chamber, and spend in prayer to God all the remaining time till day break. His son, John, says of him, “my father used always to retire to rest with his children, but all night long, till morning, I have heard him pray in another room. The heavenly sweetness with which he used to be refreshed served him instead of sleep, so that in the morning, no one ever rose from bed so fresh and cheerful as he used from prayer.”‡ It is curious to remark, that while private devotion instigated men to this dedication of the tragic melancholy night, the very laws of the state lent their assistance to secure it from profanation. By the French laws, all labourers were forbidden to

\* Italia Sacra, vi.

† Pasquier Recherche de la France, lib. viii. 23.

‡ Leben und Geschichte des Nikol von Flüe, by Weissenbach.

work after vespers. Carpenters alone were permitted to work during the night, when coffins were to be made for the dead, or works for funeral ceremonies erected. It was not even lawful for tradesmen to sell goods till the appointed hour had struck, which was generally tierce or nine.\* The Roman laws prohibited judgments from being passed at night, notwithstanding that Minerva had been made to sanction the contrary discipline of her own favoured tribunal.†

To the night of the middle ages belonged many solemn and poetic things, of which the trace only remains, as in some towns of England, where, at particular seasons of the year, during the night, one hears a small bell tolled a certain number of times, and then, in a mournful tone, some rude verses chaunted, which had been substituted, no doubt, for the ancient invitation to pray for the dead at that hour, a devotion to which indulgences were attached. In Italy during the octave at all souls, the bell for the dead tolls the whole night long, or at least for a considerable space about midnight. In the history of the church of Durham, we read, the "three bells of the lantern were rung ever at midnight, at twelve of the clock; for the monks went evermore to matins at that hour of the night."‡ On arriving in Italy the traveller is soon reminded of the beautiful similitude which Dante draws from the tones that sanctify a Catholic night.

As clock, that calleth up the spouse of God  
To win her bridegroom's love at matin's hour,  
Each part of other fitly drawn and urg'd,  
Sends out a tinkling sound, of note so sweet,  
Affection springs in well-disposed breast."||

O, how does a youthful imagination then sympathise with all that the holy fathers have written respecting the night! how does it love that holy silence which reigns on all nature! The river has still its silver flood, but no more its murmur; the highways are desert, the cabins voiceless; no leaf trembles under the vaults of the wood, and the sea itself, expiring on the strand, scarcely rolls against it a plaintive wave.§ How far is every thing here from the frown of sable-vested night, the consort of chaos! How holy is the Catholic night, the night of the middle ages! the time in which saints, all over the earth, are assembled to chaunt the same sacred hymns, and to commemorate the same great deliverance. Some seasons, indeed, there were, as those of Christmas and Easter, in which it was in an especial degree the privileged and blessed time; nights in which things celestial were joined to earthly, and divine to human; in qua terrenis cœlestia, humanis divina junguntur; for as the church of God says, it was, "while all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, that the Almighty word came from heaven, from the royal throne. Seven times in the year, mass used to be said at midnight. At Christmas, in consequence of the ordinance of Pope St. Telesphorus, in the second century, on Holy Saturday, on the festival of St. John the Baptist, and on the collation of holy orders, on the four Saturdays of the Ember weeks."\*\* For a long time

\* Monteil, *Hist. des Français*, tom. iii. 261.

† I. 35.

‡ Parad. x.

\*\* Benedict XIV. de Sacrificio Missæ, ii. Append. 388.

† Æschylus *Eumenid.* 692.

§ De la Martine.

after St. Leo, ordinations used to take place on the Saturday night of XII lessons, towards Sunday morning, after the second nocturn of matins, as appears from an ancient Roman order which was in the abbey of Vendome.\*

But while the Church of God is thus risen at the solemn midnight hour, where sit the world's children? Alas! for them, the night has no terrors, excepting when there is a question of going to the assemblies of the faithful: worshippers of pleasure—children of night, pursuers of private sins, as hot on the scent, as if like their elder sisters, sung by Æschylus, they were divinely deputed to follow the trace of blood that cried to heaven; who are in constant habits of braving the obscure air at the hour when rest is provided for all flesh, are immediately convinced that they would contract some fatal illness if the way were to the church instead of the festal hall. They might, it is said, meet revellers in the streets, and religion might incur disgrace if her temples were to be open at those hours, which the moderns, by common consent, think must needs be consigned over either to sleep or to Babylonian rites. To them we may address the words of St. Clemens Alexandrinus to the Pagans, who were initiated in the orgies of Bacchus, for, as he says, “in the mysteries of the Atheists,” “formerly the silent night was to virtuous men a veil of sweetness, but now, to you, the sacred night is filled with the noise of dissolute speech.”† If compelled to absent themselves on such occasions from the assemblies of the faithful, men were not heard in the middle ages to declaim against this devout and most ancient exercise, or to condemn as imprudent those who maintained its utility, as if almost it were an evil as great as heresy, to love the poetical side of a religious life. “Because you are infirm,” said Nicetius the bishop, “do not condemn the vigils of others. It would be foolish and sufficiently foreign from religion to depreciate those who run well, because we are unable ourselves to run; though we have not the power, we ought not to envy but to congratulate those who have; for as he who consents to malice is partaker of the punishment, so, a participation in glory may be hoped for from a consent to goodness.”‡

But now the approach of rosy-fingered morn is witnessed in the eastern sky, and the melody of choirs is resumed to hail the hour of universal lauds to the eternal Founder of things, who ruleth day and night. Dominus regnavit now is heard, and the rest which follows of that psalm in which, says Hugo de St. Victor, “Christ, with admirable brevity, is multifariously praised.”§ The church seems to come forth refreshed and more than ever joyous. She descends to speak of all the various duties of men, and sings the dawn with transport; for then the army of errors deserts the hurtful way; the sailor collects his forces; straits and seas grow calm; at the crowing of the cock, hope returns; health is imparted to the infirm; the robber's sword is sheathed; faith is restored to the fallen; Jesus she invokes that he would look upon the wavering, for, at his look, sins would cease and crime be washed away with weeping; that he would enlighten the senses, and dispel the sleep of minds. At the rising of the star of light,—she prays to be protected

\* Chardon Hist. des Sacramens, tom v. c. 6.

† De vigiliis servorum Dei. Dacher. Spicileg. iii.

‡ Clem. Alex. Protrepticus, c. 2.

§ De Officiis Ecclesiast. cap. 10.



from all hurtful things during that day,—that the tongue may be tempered so as to serve no horrid contention, that the sight may be directed so as to draw no vanity, that the heart's recesses may be pure and the pride of the flesh humbled; so that when the day shall depart, her children may be enabled, through abstinence, to sing glory to the coequal and eternal Three.

After the offices of lauds and prime succeeded the sacred mass, though in times of persecution, when the assemblies of the faithful were necessarily less frequent, the Eucharistic sacrifice was not daily offered. In the great church of Constantinople, down to the XIth century, mass used to be celebrated only on Sundays and Sabbath days and festivals, which was a vestige of the ancient necessity. Whereas, in all churches of less antiquity, the divine mysteries were daily celebrated according to pious usage,\* sanctioned by the constitutions termed apostolical.† Mass used to be said daily in the time of St. Ambrose and St. Basil, after the example of the apostles; a usage which is acknowledged to have existed in the first ages, even by Protestant writers.‡ St. Cyprien shows that mass should be said daily, and that all should communicate daily. To the like effect speaks St. Hilary. With the Greeks, they who passed three Sundays without communion were said to be excommunicated.¶ From the sixth century, the daily celebration of mass was a common discipline, but it appears that in the seventh it became still more general for pious men to assist every day at mass. St. Goar celebrated mass every day, and the same is recorded of St. Geremarus Abbot; and Bede affirms the same of Ceolfred, the abbot of his monastery. The bishop, Licinus, is also related to have daily sung mass with great compunction of heart, but Mabillon interprets the word to mean only having simply recited it. In the eighth century, this discipline was enjoined by the decrees of the synods,§ and since the Council of Trent, it continued to be the universal practice of devout Christians. “When you have risen from your bed,” says Louis of Blois, “after making the sign of the cross and recommending your soul and body to the Most High, hasten to the church as the place of your refuge and a garden of spiritual delights.”\*\* Hence we may remark, that on occasions of public danger or calamity, there was no necessity, as we read in the Pagan times of Rome, for the state to appoint a day of general prayer, for which a form of words was to be prepared, for the church had already her appointed course, and there was always a sacrifice ready and a sublime invocation for those who sought to propitiate the mercy of Heaven. What the venerable Bede said of priests, who, without a legitimate hindrance, fail to present the divine host to God every day, may well account for the zeal of holy men to offer up mass daily. “Tell me,” cries the bishop Iona, in his “Institute of Laics,” “tell me, you who come to the church only on feast days, are not the other days also feast days? Are they not days of the Lord, for on what day does not the church celebrate the victory of some

\* Thomassinus de veteri et nova Ecclesiæ disciplin. pars iii. lib. i. c. 72.

† Const. Apost. ii. 59. viii. 35—39.

‡ Rheinwald Die Kirchliche Archæologie, p. 332.

¶ Walafrid Strabo de rebus ecclesiasticis, cap. 20.

§ Mabill. Præfat. in ii. Sæcul. Bened.

\*\* Guide Spirit. cap. 2.

martyr or confessor?"\* Pope Benedict XIV. considers the arguments of those who maintain that mass should not be daily celebrated, on the plea that "*semper abundantia contumeliosa in se est*," and that, "*quicquid raro fit, pretiosius fit, cum fit*," and that the priest who seldom celebrates is usually moved to tears, which he would not be if he daily offered. Having refuted these objections, he concludes thus:—"In this last objection there lies an ambiguity, for, as St. Antoninus says, 'If any one should estimate that disposition in himself, from the sensible compunction of heart, profusion of tears, fervour of mind, and similar sentiments, so that when he feels these, he believes himself to be disposed, and when he does not feel them, he supposes himself indisposed, he walks very uncautiously and is most often deceived. Frequently those who have no such things are in a state of grace, and they who have them are altogether without grace, though they do what is gracious.'"

Admirable was the diligence evinced by the Church to enable the faithful people to perform their devotions without interruption to their social duties. Within the churches the divine mysteries were successively celebrated from break of day till noon, to suit the early traveller, the labourer, the domestic, the student, the charitable matron, the pious father of a family. We have seen that in almost every street there was a church or chapel, that no time might be lost in passing from the study or the workshop, or the palace. The number of altars in churches was partly designed for this object. In the church of the Holy Sepulchre, at Jerusalem, built by Constantine, there were three altars, but when visited by the bishop Arculfus, in the seventh century, it contained five altars. There were four in the Basilica of St. Mary, in the Vale of Josaphat. In the sixth century, it appears from St. Gregory of Tours,† there were two altars in the Basilica of St. Peter at Bourdeaux. St. Ambrose also mentions many altars being in one church.‡ In the new church of the monastery of Cluny, which was dedicated in the year 1131, there were twenty-four altars. The altar of St. Gabriel, the Archangel was in the tower of the bells; that of St. Michael the Archangel, was over the portal. The ancient chronicles of Strasburg attest that there were formerly in that cathedral fifty altars. In some churches a mass used to be said expressly for servants.¶ Portable altars were in use long before the eleventh century. St. Wilfram, bishop of Sens, passing the sea in a ship, is said to have celebrated the sacred mysteries upon a portable altar. Bede§ relates that the two Ewaldes offered sacrifice daily, having with them vessels and the table of an altar dedicated. Hincmar prescribed that no one should celebrate mass upon an altar which was not consecrated. All this discipline prevailed at least as early as in the fifth century.

The Eucharistic sacrifice terminated, the church resumed her holy songs, and celebrated tierce and sext, after which followed an interval of repose while the day reigned in its fullness. But nothing is constant

---

\* *Ionæ Aurelianusensis Episcop. de Institutione Laicali*, lib. i. cap. 2, apud Dacher. *Spicileg.* tom. i.

† *De Gloria Mart.* 34.

‡ *Joan. Devoti Instit. canonic.* lib. ii. tit. vii. §. 1.

¶ *Lebeuf, Hist. du diocèse de Paris*, chap. Corbeil.

§ *Lib.* v. cap. 11.

with men. Every thing revolves and perishes. "Alas," exclaims Bona, "we proposed to perform great things when the sun was mounted to the meridian, and lo! in a short time, it descends to evening. The church is about to sing nones. It is the ninth hour, in which Christ died for man, in which man had been expelled from paradise; \* the day is become old, the night is approaching; such is the frailty of this mortal life. How soon the day declines, the heat cools, the light sinks and is buried in the shade of evening, but we must run our course until we shall behold the Lord of Lords in Sion." Nones having been sung, the church prepares to celebrate a more august office.

It is the vesper hour. "Ah, what a symbol is here," cries Bona. "Let us say, therefore, with the disciples, whose hearts burned within them by the way, 'Mane nobiscum, Domine, mane nobiscum, quoniam advesperascit.' Now evening, the mother of night, will bring forth darkness; now sadness oppresses us, and despair sinks us down. The waters have come even unto our soul: now a horrible tempest afflicts our spirits: the cold of iniquity freezes us, and a wounded conscience dreads the terrible sentence of the Judge. Remain with us, O most clement Lord, since without thee we can do nothing; we are nothing! Thou art our consolation, thou art our refuge and strength; thou art a tower of might against the face of our enemies. The night of wickedness covers all things; the light of truth faileth; depravity abounds: charity grows cold; our eyes are turned to thee, that we may not perish. Remain with us, that the darkness may not come upon us, and that the shining light, which shineth to us in that dark place, may not be extinguished in the night. The end of life is near; the evening of our day: deliver us from the power of darkness, and turn not in anger from thy servants; because if thou art with us, we shall fear no evil in the midst of the shadow of death, but with the brightness of thy grace we shall be enlightened in that region of the dead. It is good to be with thee, O sweet Jesus. Remain with us, and turn not away from us. These are the shades of evening; the darkest night draws on, in which no man can work. Remain with us, and close the door upon us, until the darkness shall pass over, and light again rise to visit us."†

O, who can appreciate the charm of these short, pathetic, affectionate addresses from the altar, after vespers, when so many a youth is grateful to the darkness for concealing his falling tears!

It is the vesper hour, when the poor soul thirsts and hungers more intensely, inasmuch as the trials of the day have worn her down. It is now that she seeks the silence of ancient groves, and the peaceful walks of moss-grown battlements. The very poet of the secular society is not insensible to its influence:—

"Sweet hour of twilight!—in the solitude  
Of the pine forest, and the silent shore  
Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,  
Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow'd o'er  
To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood.  
Ever-green forest! which Boccaccio's lore  
And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to me:  
How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!"

\* Durandus Rationale, lib. v. 8.

† Card. Bona de Divina Psalmod. ccxxii.  
2 F 2



Pythagoras prescribed that in the evening, before the hour of rest, after the perturbations of the day and the tumult of action, the mind, which is then moved like a flood, should be appeased and composed by the sound of gentle music.\* We read of our Divine Lord, that having dismissed the crowd, he ascended a mountain alone to pray; and when it was evening, he was there alone.† In the heart of cities, and even wherever the towers of a feudal castle cast their broad shadow over the open lands, there was always during the middle ages, a sacred portal, sure to be open to receive the pilgrim, at the evening hour, to a temple, in which he might compose his turbid thoughts by holy meditations, joined with those Hypodorian strains, which soothe the imagination and tranquilize the heart.

Vespers were always celebrated with more solemnity than any other of the lesser hours. St. Benedict prescribes that they should be fully and sweetly sung.

But now begins night, with her sullen wings, to double-shade the desert.—

“Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,  
While night’s black agents to their prey do rouse.”

Fowls in their clay nests are couched, and wild beasts come forth, the woods to roam. Five, six, seven—the clock has ceased, and now we shall hear the toll of the cloister bell for the benediction. Complins may represent the end of life, as it is the last office of the day;—for, as Pindar says, “Men are but of one day, and the shadows of a dream.” How delightful that calling to memory of the complin hymn, when Dante marked, from among the spirits that sat apart in limbo,

“One risen from its seat, which with its hand  
Audience implor’d. Both palms it join’d and rais’d,  
Fixing its steadfast gaze towards the East—  
‘Te lucis ante,’ so devoutly then  
Came from its lip, and in so soft a strain,  
That all my sense in ravishment was lost.  
And the rest after, softly and devout,  
Follow’d through all the hymn, with upward gaze,  
Directed to the bright supernal wheels.”†

Complin sung, silence was observed till after mass the following morning. This was prescribed by St. Benedict; and we find the observance recommended by all the great spiritual writers of the middle age.‖ Now succeeded the solemn matin bell, tolling at the hour of nature’s silence and repose, which seems like a suspension of this mortal life! “O awful sound!” cries Bona. “One’s course then seems finished. Then we may say, with the holy Columban, ‘O tu vita quantos decepisti! quæ dum fugis, nihil es; dum videris, umbra es: quæ quotidie fugis, et quotidie venis, veniendo fugis, quæ fugiendo venis: dissimilis luxu, similis fluxu. Te ostendis tanquam veram, te reducis quasi fallacem. Ergo nihil es, O mortalis vita, nisi viæ imago, fugitiva ut avis, ut nubes incerta, fragilis ut umbra.’”§

\* Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 15.

† Matt. xiv. 23.

‡ Purg. viii.

‖ D’Avila, Epist. lxxvii.

§ S. Columban. Homil. de Fallacia Vitæ Humanæ.

## CHAPTER III.

THE divisions of the sacred hours marked, let us proceed to observe the general character belonging to all these offices of grace: for there is much in them intelligential and abstruse, that deserves deep attention, much to excite a reasonable and pious curiosity, and somewhat, perhaps, to explain and defend, in consideration of the ignorance and wants of an age which has endeavoured to render every thing perspicuous but what relates to heaven, and which toils unceasingly to make vain provision for the gratification of every thirst but that of justice.

To have seen the importance of an uniform liturgy, one must have felt the necessity for its being unchangeable, and that for the reason assigned by St. Augustin: "*Lex orandi, lex credendi*;" for the prayers which the Church uses in the administration of her holy rites, are so many proofs of the respective doctrines on which they depend; and these prayers could only be preserved from alteration through a long series of ages, by retaining the ancient language in which they were originally composed.\*

Stephen Pasquier has well said, "*Il ne faut rien eschanger de ce que une longue ancienneté a approuvé en une religion; voire jusques aux paroles mesmes.*"† Divine Providence had caused the language of Rome to become, in a certain sense, universal, in order to facilitate the extension of the Gospel and the maintenance of ecclesiastical unity, as in earlier ages he had preserved the Semitic languages in a state of immobility, in order, as Walton supposes, to render more easy the migrations and external relations of the patriarchs; or, as the Count de Robiano suggests, to preserve more unchangeable, clear, and certain, the reading of the sacred text.‡

The Germans, Franks, Poles, and all northern nations, when converted to the faith, received the liturgy in the Latin tongue. The Moravians, indeed, form an exception, to whom, in 867, Adrian II. gave permission to have mass celebrated in the Sclavonic, but he himself recalled this faculty, which was again given to them by his successor, and again recalled in the eleventh century by Alexander II. The only answer that the Duke of Bohemia could obtain on this head from Gregory VII. who had a deep conviction of the necessity of the ancient discipline, was this—"Scias nos huic petitioni tuæ nequaquam satisfacere posse." In fact, had this most important law of discipline been abrogated, a wide field would have been opened to innovators in matters of faith—for the living languages, in consequence of the natural disposition of men to be esteemed great and distinguished, are liable to constant mutations—and therefore, it would have been necessary to translate the liturgy as often as languages changed. There would be as many versions as tongues and dialects; so that there would be no end of making liturgies, and the doctrines of faith, at the mercy of human vanity, could

---

\* Vide Digressio Historic. ii. in Chron. S. Monast. Casinens. cap. 32.

† Recherches de la France, lib. viii. 12.

‡ Etudes sur l'Ecriture de l'Egypte.

no longer be preserved, as in a sacred asylum, under the faithful key of the ancient language.

Besides this we must remark that, in the ages of faith, men were not children in philosophy; they had drawn for themselves the proper inference from the fact remarked by Clemens Alexandrinus, when speaking of "the first and generative languages, which," saith he, "are barbarous, but supplied with names from nature;" he observes, "and men confess that prayers delivered in a barbarous—that is, in a tongue different from their own—are more impressive; *καὶ τὰς εὐχὰς ὁμολογοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι δυνατωτέρας εἶναι τὰς βαρβαρὰ φωνῇ λεγόμενας.*"\* Certainly there was no reason why theologians, in reference to the use of things divine, should not possess the same advantage as was proved to be so conducive to the good of poets with the Greeks and Latins, who had a distinct language by which they could convey the most familiar things in terms intelligible to all, and yet wholly different from those under which they might be associated with vulgar or unworthy ideas, from being in common use. This usage did not contradict the maxim, that it was the simple and ignorant who were capable of the highest prayer: for, as St. Thomas and St. Bonaventura distinguish the three modes of attention to the divine offices, the first consisting in the material pronunciation of the words—the second in their literal sense—the third in their mystic sense, which is God: the first, which relates to the words, belonging not to the simpler sort, who are ignorant of Latin; the second, which relates to the sense, regarding theologians and learned men; the third, which relates to the affections, belonging to monks and men of devout life, although they may be void of letters; it follows that incompetency with regard to the first, which is called the material, and even a less degree of knowledge respecting the second, which is termed the formal, diminishes not the perfection of those who possess the third, which is the final attention, constituting the piety of the religious and the poor.† Pure prayer, as Hugo of St. Victor defines it, is when the mind, from the abundance of devotion, is so inflamed with love, that when it supplicates God, it forgets the precise object of its desire.‡

Unction, again, no less incommunicable than authority, is the distinctive character of the prayers of the Catholic Church. This impressive quality can be felt; it can never be defined. It is the ravishing expression of a filial confidence; it is the work of the spirit of love, which prays in the Church by ineffable groans. It is the result of order and peace; it is the echo of a soul, of which all the faculties are held in accordance by obedience. The words of the Roman liturgy, besides that they are the expression of the vows of the Church, which is holy, are also the words of saints, of men capable of finishing the hymn begun by angels. These texts chosen in Scripture to edify piety, have been selected by humble, and innocent, and fervid souls, accustomed to find in them the sweetest nourishment. These mysterious words, which they have given us from their own fund, breathe still the faith and the candour of past ages. In general, the deeper we search, the more we shall

\* Stromat. lib. i. c. 21.

† S. Thom. 2. 2. 9. 85, art. 13. S. Bonav. lib. vii. de Process. Relig. c. 3.

‡ De Modo Orandi Libellus, cap. 2.



be convinced that there is a profound reason for every institution of the ecclesiastical order. True, the Church offices, in the solemn antiquity and symbolism of their language, may have presented difficulties; but these are greatly exaggerated by the moderns. They were such as might be easily overcome where desire was felt; and of them we may say, in the words of St. Augustin, speaking of the many and multiplex obscurities in the holy Scriptures—that all this was purposely provided in order to subdue pride by labour, and to prevent the understanding from becoming fastidious, which generally contracts a contempt for things of easy investigation: for, as Pellico justly observes, “Exquisite sentiments, whether of art or of morals, are only acquired by a diligent will, and by assiduous efforts.”\*

Men babble now of the necessity of having prayer composed in language more refined; but as De Maistre remarks, “the beauty of prayer has nothing in common with that of expression, for prayer is like the mysterious daughter of the great king, ‘*omnis gloria filiæ regis ab intus.*’ It is something without a name, but which is perfectly perceptible, and which mere talent alone can never imitate.” Perhaps one might affirm with justice, that a studied expression would distract and misdirect the attention; at least, there are many who might cite the words of the ancient critic in reference to the style of Cato and the Gracchi, and say in allusion to themselves, “*veterem illum horrorem dicendi malim quam istam novam licentiam.*”† But yet on the other hand, where shall we find, in the true sense of the term, grace of composition, if it be not discernible in the voice of the Church? What skills it to study harmony of words if there be not the soul stirring might of poesy?

————— “Ah, that piece of song,  
That old and antique song, methought it did relieve my  
Heart much more than light airs, and recollected terms  
Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times.”

That frequent repetition of uniform syllables and the sound of these terrible finals in the ancient pieces, when sustained by the majestic gravity of the Gregorian chaunt, possessed a great empire over minds. Cicero remarks the grandeur of many monotonous finals in a verse, and adds, “*Præclarum carmen! est enim et rebus et verbis et modis lugubre.*” The lines which he thus eulogises might be passed on a modern reader for a monkish composition.

“*Hæc omnia vidi inflammari,  
Priamo vi vitam evitari,  
Jovis aram sanguine turpari.*”‡

Those archaisms too or antiquated forms of expression abounding in the Vulgate, which are elsewhere only met in writers anterior to the Augustan age, were rather a beauty than a defect in the divine offices. The introduction of words, also new to the Latin tongue, but required by the doctrines of faith, was another feature calculated to awaken noble and devout thoughts. Vivifico is a word not used by profane writers. St. Jerome was driven to the necessity of often adopting it, as the idea of giving or restoring life is so essentially Christian, that no heathen could

---

\* Dei Doveri Degli Uomini, cap. 12.    † Quintill. lib. viii. 5.    ‡ Tuscul. iii. 5.  
VOL. II.—47

have been found to express it. The classic authors would themselves defend this usage on principles of common sense, for, as Cicero says, "logicians, physicians, geometers, musicians, and grammarians, speak after their own manner, and use peculiar words. Not even common workmen can retain their arts without using words unknown to us, but in use with themselves. 'Quo magis hoc philosopho faciendum est. Ars est enim philosophia vitæ; de qua disserens arripere verba de foro non potest.'"<sup>\*</sup> Zeno himself was an inventor rather of new words than of new things. If this was permitted to Zeno, why not to St. Jerome? "Sunt enim rebus novis nova ponenda nomina," says Cicero, citing the example of Epicurus himself, who called *πρόληψιν* what before him no one had ever named by that word.<sup>†</sup> The celebrated lexicographer, Gesner, used to say, that he considered the Vulgate as a classical work, since it enabled him to survey the Latin language in its full extent. But even if no such titles were available, men should learn, as St. Augustin says, that "it is not the voice but the affection of mind which reaches to the ears of God. Therefore, they ought not be disposed to laugh, if they should hear God invoked with barbarisms or solecisms, for though it is by a tone in the forum, it is by a vow in the Church that they are blessed. 'Itaque forensis illa nonnumquam forte bona dictio, numquam tamen benedictio dici potest.' Of the sacrament which they are about to receive, it is sufficient to the more prudent to hear the meaning, but with minds of slower apprehension, it is necessary to employ more words and similitudes, lest they should despise what they behold." The high antiquity of the Roman offices may be seen also in these responses and anthems composed of words from the ancient Vulgate, whose religious and apostolic simplicity is long anterior to the age of St. Jerome; in that division of the Psalms traced by this great doctor at the desire of Pope Damasus, after the ancient usage which recalls the vigils of the first Christians,—in the mysterious, profound, and inimitable style of the collects, and other deprecatory formulæ; in those hymns, composed by a great bishop in the Ambrosian Basilica to occupy a faithful people while besieged by a furious princess; in those hymns of Prudentius, Sedulius, Gregory, and Hilary, of an Innocent and a Thomas Aquinas. In truth, I should never finish were I to trace, in reference to antiquarian lore, all the grandeur and interest of the Roman Liturgy. Shall I speak of the sublime chaunts which have come down to us along with these admirable prayers? I might call to witness even Protestant authors, in whose ears they have never sounded without causing to vibrate the Catholic chord. Who has not felt the charm of these sublime passages imprinted with the genius of ages that are no more, and that have left no other vestige behind them? Who has not shuddered at the simple, plain chaunt of the office of the dead when the tender and the terrible are so admirably blended? What Christian has ever heard the paschal chaunt of "Hæc dies," without a sentiment of infinity, or the "O filii et filiæ," without feeling his heart inflamed with a more tender love for the children of men? Who has ever heard on the festivals of the Assumption and of All Saints, a whole people making the holy vaults resound with the inspired accents of the Gaudeamus without feeling himself carried

<sup>\*</sup> De Finibus, lib. iii.

<sup>†</sup> De Nat. Deorum, lib. i.

back, through the lapse of ages, to the time when the echoes of subterranean Rome repeated this triumphal chaunt, while the empire was hastening to its end, and the Church commencing its eternal destinies? \*

But not only was Latin the language of the Church, symbolical too in the highest sense was the expression of her desires, so that in proposing her liturgy as an object of literary and philosophic study, one might say each moment in the words of Dante,

————— “Ye of intellect  
Sound and entire, mark well the lore conceal’d  
Under close texture of the mystic strain.”†

The origin of this whole discipline must be sought for in the very nature of things, for as a German philosopher observes, “all thought-communication of men upon religious truth must, in its affirmative expression, be figurative and exhibited in symbols.”‡ Angels behold spiritual things by means of divine illumination, but to mortal eyes they can only be presented through the medium of sensible symbols. The language of the Church in this respect meets us still in every department of the arts, where it is often not comprehended; for it was in conformity with it that painters and sculptors employed those lilies, pelicans, stags, and other objects of visible nature to signify spiritual and invisible things. The creature as well as Scripture being, as Hugo of St. Victor saith, the book of God to recall man to the true and immutable good.¶ How naturally and unavoidably the Church inclined to this usage will be obvious at once, if we bear in mind the practice of the Holy Scripture, and above all the example of our Lord, the fact of whose profound parables should put to silence the rash objectors who would blame the Church, without considering that the symbol is the same whether it consist in words or in visible objects. Who need be told that the judgment of the wise in all ages has sanctioned the use of symbols? Clemens Alexandrinus§ relates that Hipparchus, the Pythagorean, was expelled from the school, because he had openly written down the precepts of the Master; and that they placed a column to him as to a person that was dead. The wise ancients saw the necessity of using allegory and figure in the expression of sublime truth. Gregory Nazianzen says, that the sacred mysteries are not to be explained before the base, according to the principle expressed by Sallust, the philosopher, that to hide truth in fables, prevents the foolish from despising, and compels the studious to philosophize,\*\* for which reason it was that the Egyptians placed sphynxes at the entrance of their temples. But let us remark the difference between the figures of the ancient sanctuaries and those of the Catholic temple. In the former, the symbol which conveyed truth only to a few of the initiated, gave birth to the grossest idolatry with the rest of men; whereas the Church, on the contrary, commences with a verbal and authoritative promulgation, and only after that clothes the mysteries which it has announced in sensible forms, as an earthly refraction of the heavenly light, accommodated to the neces-

\* Le Mémorial Catholique, i. 2.

† Infer. c. 9.

‡ Fries Religios Philosophie und Philosophischen Æsthetik.

¶ Institut. Monasticæ Sermo viii.

§ Strom. lib. v.

\*\* Lib. de Diis et Mundo, cap. 3.



sities of her children. The Christian use of mystic words date from the very cradle of the Church. "The use of symbolic language," says Clemens Alexandrinus, "is most useful for many things; it is conducive to right theology, to piety, to the exercise of understanding, to brevity of speech, and it is an argument of wisdom."\* He remarks, that the style of the old Greek as well as that of the Hebrew philosophy was enigmatical, for that brevity of expression was studied as most useful and persuasive. He shows that the prophets made use of enigmas, and that the mysteries were not shown clearly to all men alike, but only after certain purifications and previous instruction. "In a word," he says, "all theologians, both barbarians and Greeks, concealed the principles of things, and delivered truth through enigmas and symbols, in allegories and metaphors, and such tropes. Nay, even the wise men of the Greeks conveyed their lessons in short words and apophthegms, such as *γινώσκεισαντὸν* and the like. The poets also, teaching the theology of the prophets, philosophize by means of allegory, as did Orpheus, and Linus, Musæus, Homer, Hesiod, and other wise men of that class, more obscurely conveying truths in dreams and symbols, not through envy, but that by means of searching out the sense of the enigma, men might be more enticed to the discovery of truth. In the same manner," he remarks, "we are instructed in the Psalms and in the prophets, where the Lord opens his mouth in parables; † and by the apostles who speak wisdom to the initiated, the wisdom of God in a mystery which the princes of this world knew not." "Sapientes abscondunt scientiam," says Solomon, in order that the mocker may seek wisdom and not find it; ‡ for the first essential qualification for understanding symbolic language is a revering spirit. All ancient wisdom certainly recognized the importance of symbolic instruction. The Pythagorean symbols were celebrated in the philosophy of the barbarians, such as "keep no swallows in your house," that is, have no talker or busy body, and smooth down your bed when you rise from it, that is, extirpate every vestige of passion. In fact, the symbolic mode of teaching by enigmas was characteristic of the whole Pythagoric institution. || Idanthuras, the Scythian king, as Pherecydes the Syrian relates, replied to Darius by a symbol instead of by words. § Androcydes, the Pythagorean, describes the letters called Ephesian, as consisting of symbols and obscure expressions, as for instance, darkness is called *ἄσκιον*, from having no shadow, and light *κατάσκιον*, since it involves a shadow; *τετράς*, is the year, from its having four seasons, and *βέδν* was the air, as being *βιόδωρον*.\*\* The stoics say that Zeno, in order to prove the vocation of his disciples, wrote his first instructions in such an obscure manner that it was hard to understand them. In like manner, the writings of Aristotle were twofold, *τὰ ἐσωτερικὰ* for his initiated, and *τὰ ἐξωτερικὰ* for the vulgar without, and the former were unintelligible to common men.

What is mysticism? what must be mystically reviewed? Religion, love, nature, and state. The church offices were composed of symbols, and as an ascetic writer remarks, "*nisi omnia referantur ad laudem Creatoris, inanis est omnis visio videntium.*"†† "Every thing in the Church

\* Stromat. v. 8.

† Isa. lxx. 3.

‡ Parab. x.

|| Jamblich. 34.

§ Stromat. v. 7.

\*\* Id. v. 8.

†† Thom. à Kemp. Hortulus Rosarum.

is full of divine signification and mystery," says Durandus. "Every thing in it abounds in celestial sweets, when one knows how to look at it, when one knows how to draw the honey from the stone, and the oil from the hardest flint. Who can enable us to do this? Lord, the well is deep, and I have no vessel wherewith to draw the water! It is for the priests, the dispensers of the mysteries, to comprehend and reveal them to others." To condemn the use of symbolic instruction as unworthy of an age of the highest intelligence, would indicate a total ignorance of the general law and construction of human minds, since whatever be the method of instruction adopted, the fact which Dante remarks is incontrovertible, that

—————"from things sensible alone ye learn  
That, which, digested rightly, after turns  
To intellectual."\*

It should be observed, moreover, that the spirit of the middle ages was peculiarly favourable to this method, so that the symbols adopted in the ritual of the Church, must have then possessed extraordinary charms in the estimation of all ranks of society. No object or occasion seemed too trifling to furnish matter for the exercise of their disposition to view things in the light of symbols. Ives, of Chartres, receiving a comb as a present from his dear friend Gerard, in reply to him, interprets it as an emblem which can teach him the duties of his episcopal office.† The laity evince the same inclination: men that were not all tongue, but deeds and truth, would thus in the common intercourse of life, in dumb significants proclaim their thoughts, and, as Shakspeare witnesseth in the Temple garden, give, in the plucking of a red rose or a white, an answer to the summons of Plantagenet. Dom Claude de Vert, a learned Benedictine, in his work upon the ceremonies of the Church, offered a simple and natural explanation of most of them. Languet, Archbishop of Sens, published a reply, and assigned to them a wholly symbolical origin. Both of these views no doubt were just. As Duns Scotus remarks of the sacred Scriptures, the divine offices of the Catholic Church had a literal and a spiritual or mystic sense, which last, in three-fold division, was either allegorical, tropological, or anagogical, referring either to what was to be believed, performed, or hoped, and sometimes one sign or word, like that of the cross, or the name Jerusalem comprised all—a literal sense, signifying an event or a city, a tropological, denoting trust and sanctity, an allegorical, denoting the Church militant, and an anagogical, signifying the triumphant Church.‡ No one who loves to study the doctrine of perception, in reference to the beauties of poetry and art, can be insensible to the care evinced by the Church, to press into her service every thing which can bring unity into a visible form; and, indeed, the great charm and might of poetry over human life, is never more fully felt than when it employs consecrated figures and symbols to express the mystery of our existence in the world of wishes, and the ideas of anticipation which console it. That the symbolic sense was intended in the ceremonies of faith, is proved from the ancient fathers. Thus St. Ambrose says to the Neo-

\*¶ Parad. iv. 41.

† Ivonis Carnotens. Epist. vi.

‡ Duns Scoti Miscellan. ix. 6.

phytes, who have been just initiated by baptism into the Christian mysteries, "Recollect what you have done, what you have seen. You have seen the Levite, you have seen the priest, you have seen the high-priest. Consider not the figures of bodies, but the grace of mysteries. You have spoken in the presence of angels, for he is an angel who announces the kingdom of Christ and eternal life. Esteem him not by the appearance, but by the gift. Consider the ancient mystery of the holy rites. Do not believe only your bodily eyes, for what is seen is temporal, but what is perceived only by the mind is eternal; and do not regard the merit of the persons, but the office of the priests. Believe that Jesus our Lord was present, by reason of devout prayer, and the celebration of his mysteries. In the washing of the feet recognize, that the mystery itself consists in the ministration of humility; in the white robe, and the unction, and the cutting off of the hair, and in all the rites, observe how beautiful is the Church, and how she desires to arrive at the interior mystery, and to consecrate all the sense to Christ. You have seen the most holy altar composed, and the people approaching to it. Remember that the sacraments of the Church are more ancient than those of the synagogue, and more excellent than the manna; for there is the offering of a priest for ever, and that which you have received is the bread of angels, the very body of Christ. For here there is no order of nature, where there is excellence of grace. You have seen, therefore, the mysteries of the Church, which is said to be an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain, to signify that the mystery ought to remain sealed with you, that it may not be broken by the deeds of an evil life, or divulged to improper persons, or disclosed to the perfidious by garrulous loquacity, but that it should be placed under the protection of faith, and of a holy life and silence."\* St. Thomas says, that it is on account of the war which the ancient enemy always makes against those who are at prayer, that the Church, directed by the Holy Ghost, begins all the canonical hours with "*Deus, in adiutorium meum intende,*" a custom of immemorial usage. At matins, this is preceded with the verse, "*Domine, labia mea aperies,*" because after complins the preceding evening the lips had been closed, and therefore in beginning the nocturnal office, this prayer was added, that God would vouchsafe to open the lips of his servant to praise his name. Amalarius shows the origin of the antiphons and the double chorus of the Church offices. The antiphon, which refers to love, is alternately sung by the two sides of the choir, because charity cannot exist where there are not at least two to respond. That charity, therefore, may be perfect, it was necessary that there should be one to whom the other might exhibit its affection. Therefore the psalms are sung with alternate modulation to evince mutual love. In vain he prepares to sing the psalm who does not join to it the antiphon of love. On the more solemn festivals, the antiphon is double, to show that love ought then to be more perfect. In others, the beginning of the psalm is imperfectly announced, and at the end it is completed, because, as Hugo of St. Victor says, "Charity begun in this life is to be consummated in the end. The chanter alone begins the antiphon, which is then finished by all, because charity from

---

\* *De iis qui mysteriis initiantur, lib.*



one Christ is diffused into all the members. After the psalms all in common joy sing the antiphon, because common joy springs from common charity." On the use of the Alleluiah, Hugo of St. Victor says, "Here neither words nor understanding suffice, and yet love will not admit of silence. Therefore, the Church by thus uttering sound—pneumatizing—indicates admirably, with more expression, and in a better manner without words, than it could by means of words, what is the joy of God where words shall cease. For by this sound, though we do not describe what it is to feel eternal joy, at least, we show that it is indescribable. And since the praises of eternal life will not resound in human words, the sequences are sometimes mystically sounded forth without words; for no signification of words is necessary where the hearts of all will be laid open to all beholding the book of life."\* The Rubrics prescribed that the number of the collects should be always uneven, for the Church desires unity and conjunction, which is expressed by an uneven number, which, as it cannot be cut into equal parts, preserves its integrity.† The credo is repeated in some of the offices, partly in secret, and partly aloud, to show, as Cardinal Bona says, that "*Corde creditur ad justitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem.*" St. Edmund, the Cistercian monk, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his *Mirror of the Church*, seemed to reprehend all prayers but the divine form taught by our Lord, which was in fact the universal prayer of the middle ages, as Dionysius the Carthusian observes.‡ But Cardinal Bona shows the necessity of attending to his real meaning, lest we should conclude that he actually did intend to condemn all other forms according to the heresy of Basil.¶ Hugo of St. Victor, indeed, shows that the several petitions contained in this divine prayer, correspond to the graces which qualify men for beatitude, since their fulfilment would render men poor in spirit to hallow the name of God, meek to inherit his kingdom, mourners, from the repentance attached to that knowledge produced by submission to his will, hungry and thirsty after justice, seeking from heaven their daily bread, merciful, from a consideration of their own trespasses, clean of heart, being freed from temptation to the vices which obscure the intelligence, and children of peace, in consequence of being delivered from evil.§ The Church also uses a certain language of impassioned piety borrowed from the mystic Scriptures, which Richard of St. Victor thus proceeds to explain. "Reason and affection," saith he, "have both their hand-maidens, imagination and sensuality. So much is each necessary to its own mistress, that without them the whole world itself could confer nothing upon them, for without imagination reason would know nothing, and without sensuality, affection would taste nothing."\*\* "*Osculetur me osculo oris sui. Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis, quia amore langueo. Favus distillans labia tua, mel et lac sub lingua tua.*" "What, I pray," asks this devout contemplatist, "can be sweeter than these words? What can be more agreeable? What lan-

\* Hugo de Sanct. Victor, *Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiæ*, cap. 7.

† Bened. XIV. de *Sacrificio Missæ*, i. 110.

‡ De *Judic. Anim.* xxxviii.

¶ Yet a late writer in the *Quarterly Review* accuses him of a superstitious fondness for formulæ of prayers!

§ In *Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiæ*, cap. 7.

\*\* De *Præparatione Animi ad Contemplationem*, cap. 5.

guage would be heard more willingly, more greedily? These words seem to sound something carnal, and yet they are spiritual things which are described by them. Thus Nephtalim knows how to mix carnal with spiritual things, and to describe incorporeal by bodily things; so that the two-fold nature of man finds in his discourse whence he can admirably refresh himself, consisting as he does of a bodily and of an incorporeal nature. Hence it is that these things sound so sweet to man.\* But in order to understand this point more fully, let us again hear Richard. "After the human race," saith he, "had been expelled from the joys of Paradise, entering on the journey of the present life, it had a blind heart, to which, if it had been said by a human voice, follow God, or love God, as is said in the law, once sent out and cold with the torpor of infidelity, it would not understand what it heard. Therefore, by certain enigmas, the divine word speaks to the torpid and frigid soul, and by the things which it knoweth secretly, does it insinuate into it the love which it knoweth not. For allegory to a soul placed far from God, is, as it were, a certain machine, by which it may be raised to God, by means of interspersed enigmas, while something which it knows in words of its own, it understands in the sense of words which is not of its own, and by earthly words it is separated from the earth, for knowing exterior words it comes to understand interior. Hence in the book of the song of songs, words of corporeal love are employed, that from the body the soul may be warmed, and led to the love which is spiritual: in which words the holy Scripture is not to be ridiculed, but rather the greater mercy of God is to be considered. For it is to be remarked, how wondrously and mercifully it deals with us in this condescension. We ought, therefore, in these corporeal words to seek what is interior, and as if to leave the body. We ought to this marriage of the spouse to come with the understanding of intimate charity, that is, with the nuptial vest, with which if we are not clothed we shall be driven away to eternal darkness and the blindness of ignorance. We ought by these words of passion to pass to the virtue of impassibility, for the holy Scripture in its words is like a picture in its colours, and he is foolish indeed, who so adheres to the colours as to be ignorant of the thing which is painted."†

But it was not in words alone that the enigmatical expression of the Church was conveyed. Her ceremonies also were high symbols, demonstrating things of which the mystic sense and invisible truth are known by divine illumination to the angelic spirits. Philosophers and poets will find no works more rich in profound and beautiful thoughts than those which are designed to develope and explain the ecclesiastical symbols, written during the middle ages by such men as Hugo and Richard of St. Victor, Durandus,‡ Duranti,§ Remy of Auxerre,§ Honoré St. Autun,\*\* St. Bruno of Asti,†† Martene,‡‡ and many others. The symbolic sense of the holy vestments worn by her priests was seen in the sublime prayers which they repeated as they clothed themselves to minister at the altar.‡‡‡ A long sermon of Ives de Chartres is devoted

\* De Præparatione Animi ad Contemplationem, cap. 24.

† Richard. Victorin. in Cantica Canticorum Prolog.

‡ De Ritibus Eccles. Cath.

\*\* Gemma Animæ.

†† De Sacramentis Eccles. Myst. atque Eccles. Ritibus.

‡‡ De Antiq. Eccles. Ritibus. ‡‡‡ Benedict XIV. de Sacrificio Missæ, § 1. 54—62.

† Rationale Divin. Offic.

§ Tractat. de Dedic. Eccles.

to explaining, for the edification of manners, the mystic beauty of the priest's vestment, in which every part had a divine meaning. "Witness," says Walafrid Strabo, "that alb denoting purity, that belt signifying continence, that stole obedience, and that flowing chasuble, which is placed over all, to denote charity, the greatest of all virtues."\* The gloves of the bishop were put on to signify that his good works were sometimes to be in secret and not before men; and they were laid aside, to remind him that his light was to shine before men.† The mystic sense of the pallium, symbol of unanimity, as Pope Symmachus styles it, writing to a bishop of Austria, in the year 504,‡ and which ancient authors mention as being taken from the body of St. Peter, that is to say, from the altar over his relics, and to which they ascribe the plenitude of the pontifical office,|| is explained by Isidorus Pelusiota, in his epistle to Count Herminius. "The bishop," he says, "wears upon his shoulders a band, not of linen but of wool, to signify that he is an imitator of Christ, the great Shepherd who carried on his shoulders the sheep which he had lost and found." In the same manner Simeon Greterus interprets the omophorium.§ The procession is the way to the celestial country. "He who ministers to others the light of good works is spiritually an acolyte," says Hugo of St. Victor.\*\* Many usages and institutions will be unintelligible if we do not bear in mind their spiritual interpretation. Why, for example, was a church to be consecrated afresh if the altar had been moved, but only its walls washed with salt if the other parts of the building had been repaired after having fallen? Ives de Chartres explains this, by showing, that as the altar signified faith, its removal signified a loss of faith, which could only be repaired by a fresh reception of sacred mysteries; but the rest of the edifice when injured and repaired, was only to be washed with salt, to show that by tears and penance other sins were to be purged away. Thus, as he says, "whatever was done in the temple made with hands signified what ought to be done spiritually within us, that by the observance of visible sacraments we might be led to the knowledge and love of the invisible building."†† It may be remarked generally, that the Church had nothing for mere ornament, but, like Nature, all her rites had regard to use as well as beauty. She loved symbols that were beautiful, but no unmeaning decorations. It is observable also, that a vast number of loving harmonies and sweet incidents, fruitful in sublime, poetical, and religious emotions, were produced by keeping this in mind, and doing things in consequence simply and spiritually, without attending to the part which was material, without any regard to formality, or fancied decorum, but just as the bare need of the occasion required.

As yet we have taken but a very cursory glance at the divine offices, and already we can perceive with what solemn majesty they were clothed, and how well they corresponded to that sentiment of beauty, under the religious feeling, which, in the unity of our life of perception, divides itself into the epic of inspiration, the dramatic of resignation, and the lyric of devotion. O how the soul is moved at that solemn har-

\* De Ecclesiasticis Officiis, lib. i.

† Id. cap. 55.

‡ Germania Sacra, i. 7.

|| Sicilia Sacra, i. 41.

§ In Codinum, lib. i. c. 1.

\*\* Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiæ, cap. 1.

†† Ivonis Carnot. Epist. lxxx.



mony of holy song, at that anthem chaunted by a hundred voices, recurring with such irresistible precision, and with as much certainty as if ordained by some law of nature, at that instant rising of the tall lights, when the still sweet tones of the saintly orison solitarily ascends. So have I found it under the noble dome of Florence, where, on one side, stood the portrait of Dante, and in the centre the last work of Michael Angelo, the dead Christ in the arms of his mother,—sublime masterpiece! which death prevented him from finishing. “*Omnes sitientes, venite ad aquas.*” The Church had many secrets to minister refreshment to the parched and fainting soul. Her silence had words—for, as St. Ambrose says, “*Non solos Dominus audit loquentes qui audiebat Moysen tacentem. Plus audit tacitas cogitationes morum quam voces omnium.*”<sup>\*</sup> What rapture in that lofty, that deep, that sweet, that divine silence, in which all injuries are forgotten—that admirable silence, as much superior to all harmony as the Divine darkness is more luminous than the sun and every other light in heaven,<sup>†</sup> yielding at length only to that majestic voice, which comes to our ears, after the lapse of ages, through Moses, the rapt prophets, the Psalms and Gospel; and which, like the voice of God himself, “breaks the proud cedars, and makes the deserts tremble.”<sup>‡</sup> The divine office was not a mere rise and fall of organ sound, swelling and dying away under the Gothic arches, and causing solemn reverberations like those mountain echoes, which produce such a pleasing astonishment in the admirers of nature, who make journeys to hear waterfalls, or cannon fired under hanging rocks. In the Catholic Church, the divine office was a provision, not for the vague raptures of a wandering mind, but for the wants of the understanding, and, through the intelligence, for the necessities of the heart. At the farthest extremity of her vast temples, through the long and lofty aisles, the words of the psalm, of the antiphon, or the hymn, came to the ear loud and distinct:—and certainly, no harmony of instruments could equal the effect produced by that unearthly light of words which issued from the sanctuary. How solemn, on entering beneath Ogygean vaults, to hear the loud solitary voice entoning from the choir, the first verse of a psalm—“*Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum*”—which is then caught up by a multitude, in which laymen’s voices mingle with the priests’, eager to complete that sublime announcement.

Sometimes the Church, in her affliction, appears like a person become insensible through excess of sorrow, and reduced to a state in which the soul wishes to forget every thing but the counsels of eternal wisdom—as where she sings the *tenebræ*, and suddenly interrupts the chant of her particular sorrow, to break forth in that exclamation, expressing a general thought—“Blessed is the man who hath borne the yoke from his youth.” What terrible sadness in those tones and words of the matins on Maunday Thursday—“*Melius illi erat, si natus non fuisset?*” How awful and impressive are those tearful or joyful fragments which she is continually singing—the beauty of which was so keenly felt by Dante, as appears from his so often introducing a similar usage into his divine vision, like that prophet who begins with a conjunction, to whom were present those things which seem absent to our ignorance, and in

\* Lib. Offic. i. 41.

† Tasso, *Dialoghi ovvero della Pace.*

‡ Psalm, xxiii.

whose mind interior and exterior things were so conjoined, as if he beheld both at the same time, so that his words were only a continuance of his inward thought. At one time you hear a voice saying, "*Martinus adhuc catechumenus hac me veste contextit;*" at another, "*Sancti mei, qui in carne positi certamen habuistis;*" at another, "*Media nocte clamor factus est;*" at another, "*Mea nox obscurum non habet, sed omnia in luce clarescunt:*" and all the while there is on every side a crying,

"Blessed Mary! pray for us.  
Michael and Peter! all ye saintly host!"\*

How conformable to the most intimate emotions of the human heart, is that frequent repetition of solemn and suppliant words, round which the mind seems desirous of lingering, as if it could not be torn away from them. Without recurring to the repetitions which occur in the Psalms, and in other parts of holy Scripture, of which St. Hilary gives so profound an explanation, we can witness how true to nature is this feature of the liturgy, by referring to the ancient grave tragedians, where the chorus, in the Agamemnon of Æschylus, desires Clytemnestra to repeat what she has just announced respecting the fall of Troy—adding, "I should wish to hear those words continually, and to be filled with admiration while you repeat them again and again."† In the high lyric pathetic beauty of the hymns, we feel the true power of poesy; while that syllabic composition of song in Pindar's style imparts a tone of the utmost majesty to the triumphs of the poor. Some of the antiphons contain the last words of martyrs in their agony; others the memorable exclamations of confessors before kings; others the sentences of holy doctors, and the replies of saints, on occasions that are transmitted in the archives of history to everlasting renown. Such are those words, sung on the festival of St. Laurence—"Quo progredieris sine filio, Pater? Quo, sacerdos sancte, sine ministro properas?" Will you hear how the vilest instrument of torture can be made sublime by the confession of a martyr? Hear that fearful cry of the Church on the same great day—"In craticula te Deum non negavi, et ad ignem applicatus te Christum confessus sum." How impressive are those anthems, sung on the festival of the great advocate of Gaul—"Dixerunt discipuli ad beatum Martinum, cur nos, Pater, deseris?" and that—"Domine, si adhuc populo;"—those sung on St. Andrew's day, "O bona crux, quæ decorem et pulchritudinem de membris Domini suscepisti;" those on the feast of St. Clement, "Omnes una voce dixerunt: ora pro nobis, sancte Clemens;" those on St. Agatha's day, "Quis es tu qui venisti ad me curare vulnera mea? Ego sum Apostolus Christi," and those on St. Cecilia's day, which relate the visit of Valerianus to the catacombs on the Appian way, in search of St. Urban, who was there concealed? The antiphons on the festival of St. Lucia, at vespers, and in the office of the night and at lauds, bring us in presence of scenes so pathetic, so ineffably sweet and sad, that a youthful mind can make no comment upon them, unless by weeping. "In tua patientia possedisti animam tuam, Lucia sponsa Christi: odisti quæ in mundo sunt, et coruscas cum angelis: sanguine proprio inimicum vicisti." Can you hear what is sung

\* Dante, *Purg.* xiii.

† 318.

without feeling the fountain of tears flow over? "*Rogavi Dominum meum Jesum Christum, ut ignis iste non dominetur mei.*" Can you hear what follows without experiencing that chill which attends the sublime mysterious consolation? "*Soror mea Lucia, virgo Deo devota, quid à me petis, quod ipsa poteris præstare continuo matri tuæ? Nam et fides tua illi subvenit et ecce salvata est.*" Can you hear, lastly, the song of triumph without falling upon your knees? "*Benedico te, Pater domini mei Jesu Christi. Quia per filium tuum ignis extinctus est à latere meo?*"

A modern poet, in his description of the first Christian society, when he introduces the evening prayer, can find no words more harmonious or noble, amidst his gracious and sublime picture, than those which the Church actually uses in her complin office—"Visita, quæsumus, Domine, habitationem istam:" and he observes, that through familiarity many are insensible to the beauty of this prayer. In fact, when any of these collects, or the words of some litany, which have a cry for every feeling of the heart, are placed by a poet in the midst of the most brilliant passage, there is no transition perceptible, no interruption to the beauty and majesty of the style; but the words of the Church seem the genuine effusion of the poet, in his happiest moment of inspiration. What majesty in those antique verses murmured by the priest—the force of which has been so often felt by hell! Witness those words in the office of the dedication, pronounced by the pontiff on first entering the Church, while with his crosier he traces the victorious sign upon the threshold: "*Ecce signum crucis, fugiant phantasmata cuncta!*" While many must have felt how the prayers of the Church are composed with attention to the sweets of harmonious cadence, there are perhaps few at present who remark sufficiently with what accurate precision they invariably agree with the most profound truths of philosophy, as well as with the mysteries of faith. Political science might be learned from her prayers for princes and for all the faithful—as when, amidst the joy of the paschal solemnities, she prays that God may enable his people to attain to perfect liberty:—and physiological researches might be furthered by a close attention to the words of her various supplications. Nor can we overlook the undeviating consistency and the strict adherence to definite principles, which characterise all expressions in the divine office. Of this, Hugo of St. Victor may supply an instance. "The spirit of itself," he says, "is termed spirit—and in connexion with the body it is called soul. The human soul, because it can exist both in the body and out of it, is called, in the ecclesiastic offices, soul and spirit. Therefore," he says, "the holy Church, which believes most faithfully in the resurrection of the flesh, prays not only for the spirit, but also for the souls of the faithful."†

Well, indeed, on every consideration, may these be styled angelic offices. In the grand painting in the Church of St. Dominick at Bologna, St. Thomas—himself rather an angel than a man, one of those, of whom the whole course of the world's history can hardly produce two or three examples—is represented writing the *Lauda Sion* from the dictation of angels, whose beaming countenances are reflected in his

\* Easter Monday.

† Allegor. in Marcum, lib. iii.



looks. Of the hymn, "*Gloria in excelsis*," the writers of the middle age simply say, "This was begun by the angels and finished by doctors of the Church."—"Prima hujus hymni verba e cœlo ad nos angelorum voce derivata sunt," says Cardinal Bona,—"*Cætera quis addiderit incertum est.*"\*

The origin of the hymn on Palm Sunday, "*Gloria, laus, et honor tibi sit, rex Christe redemptor*," is thus related. "Theodulph, Bishop of Orleans, being falsely accused and imprisoned by the Emperor Lewis, son of Charlemagne, in a tower at Angers; on Palm Sunday, the procession passed by the prison, when he, opening his casement and making silence, entoned these verses of his own composition. The Emperor, who was present, was so pleased, that he ordered him to be released, and restored to his see, and from that day these verses were sung in the procession."†

Time and words would both fail me if I attempted to point out all the beauty and beatific influence of the various forms of devotion practised in the Church. Only let the litanies of our Blessed Lady, of Jesus, and of the Saints, which are sung in every region of the earth, be recalled to memory,—only let it be considered how they express the feelings with which hastening shepherds and adoring kings in Bethany must have beheld the virgin mother of the Divine infant,—that the symbolical titles given to her in accordance with the usages of sacred Scripture, can inspire the loftiest and purest conceptions of grace almighty,—that a soul which is enlightened by the Divine intelligence, discovers and feels within herself things which can never be expressed except in symbolic language,—that the love for Jesus can only dictate short seraphic praises, and ardent desires to supplicate his power,—that those adopted in reference to Mary, besides their intrinsic beauty, are sanctified by the innumerable holy persons who have used them from age to age, in life and death,—how the litany of the saints transports us into the presence of all the great and good that have adorned the Church in past time—the apostles, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, monks, hermits, virgins, widows, and all the saints of God,—how it raises up their image before the mind's eye,—how it carries us into the colosseum of Pagan Rome, into the catacombs, into the deserts of Thebaid, into the caves of the mountains and forests, into the cells of the monasteries of the middle age, and finally, into the confines of the ineffable presence of the elect in glory!—how, returning to ourselves, it reminds us of every evil to be shunned in the passage of mortal life, and of every good to be desired,—how it instructs, elevates, and ravishes the soul,—only let this be considered, and I think, in a mind most prejudiced with a prejudicating humour, these will all be found in excellency fruitful.

The corrections which some men, in modern times, have proposed in the offices, only furnish an additional evidence that they had no profound sentiment of religious truth, and that even those few mysteries of faith which they profess outwardly, have never been, as with Catholics, transfused into their very souls. Such is the necessary inference to be drawn from that substitution which was invented of the term *Redemptor* for *Regina* in the hymn "*Salve Regina*," for, to no Catholic would

\* *Benedict. XIV. Rer. Liturg. lib. ii. cap. 4.*

† *Durand. Rationale, lib. vi. c. 67.*

such words ever occur in addressing his Redeemer as to say that to him he had recourse in the sorrows of his pilgrimage, since he knows at least, by faith, that his life should be Christ, and that he should live in Christ; but to his blessed mother he turns in sighing and sorrowing in this vale of tears. Sooth, when one hears the moderns propose to modify or alter what the Church has ordained, one might think it enough to answer them in the words of Beatrice to Dante, when she beheld him terrified at the shout of spirits in Paradise—

— “Knowest not thou thou art in heav’n?  
And knowest not thou, whatever is in heaven  
Is holy; and that nothing there is done  
But is done zealously and well?”\*

One whose lore has been by genius guided may be warmed with somewhat of Mercutio’s zeal when he hears certain lispings, affecting fantasicoes, new tuners of accents, fashion-mongers, speaking on such subjects, as if any fluent phrase-man were competent to correct the liturgy of the Catholic Church; and one who is of intelligence profound may indulge a smile at their expense; for these pretended clear and exact speakers, like Euripides, are sure to be convicted of absolute error when they have an *Æschylus* for their judge; but the milder and gentler ascetic, to whom piety imparts the privilege of genius without its dangers, will be content with observing that prayer, by its very nature, must be mysterious, and that they who approach God with ardent devotion, must have very different notions of what is fitting language, from others, who, with unmoved affections, would draw towards him scientifically with their lips alone; consequently, that it is wrong to criticise pieces of this kind, since one ought rather to respect them as mystic words which comprise a spiritual sense, and which are so many testimonies of the sublimity of the state to which their authors were raised.

The moderns pride themselves on certain studied compositions which they seem to consider perfect models of prayer. Certainly no one can object to these forms on the ground of their not being sufficiently clear, as far as the words themselves are concerned, which are very precise; or of their omissions, for every want that can be conceived is specified; but it may be doubted whether they would have sounded religious, or even wise, to our ancestors, who were very averse to the use of long wordy narrations in addressing God, and who even considered it an indication of the divine spirit when nothing nominally was sought in prayer.† “That kind of supplication,” says Hugo of St. Victor, “which consists in merely accumulating epithets, such as *misericordia mea*, *refugium meum*, *susceptor meus*, *liberator meus*, and so on, is so much the more full of internal delight as it is imperfect in external expression; for affection has this property, that the more fervent it is within, the less can it be developed externally by the voice. And whatever be the words we use, the nearer devotion approaches to humility, the more acceptable is it to God. In no way is God more effectually bent to hear us than when the mind of the supplicant is wholly converted to him with affection. And, therefore, whatever be the words of

\* Parad. xxii.

† Card. Bona, de *Discretione Spirituum*, cap. 8.

supplication, they are never absurd if they are only calculated to excite the affection of the suppliant to love God, or, what is still better, if they demonstrate that he is already kindled with his love."\* Nor is this all, the Doctors of the middle age had learned with the author of the Angelic Hierachy, that as negations in divinity are often true affirmations, so to the obscurity of mysteries, a manifestation by means of dissimilar forms is more adapted,† and that divine and celestial things are often beautifully expressed by dissimilar symbols. Hence, as Hugo of St. Victor thinks, oxen, lions, eagles, horses, wheels, chariots, thrones, roses, towers, gates, stars, and similar figures are introduced, which in the estimation of those who only regard external things, are ridiculous, but to those who think piously and profoundly, they are far otherwise; for besides that from all material and bodily forms, figures may be taken to represent the incorporeal splendours of a spiritual nature, it is certain that the very dissimilitude of the symbol conduces to express the excellence of the supernal object; for dissimilar figures, more than similar emblems, lead the mind from material and bodily things, and prevent it from resting in them. Every figure, therefore, so much more evidently demonstrates truth in proportion as by its dissimilitude it is clearly a figure and not the truth, and the more unlike is the figure, so much the more does it lead the mind to truth, preventing it from resting in the similitude. Therefore the wisdom of holy theologians wonderfully descends to the use of indecorous similitudes, not permitting our material carnal sense, so in love with matter, to rest in material images, but compelling it to pass on in search of other things more fair and true, and by the very baseness of the image, purging the intellectual power of the soul from all admixture with images, in order that purely and simply it may be led to contemplate spiritual and invisible things.‡ Moreover, to any one who reflects, it is evident that a prayer of any length which is to be often repeated, must not be a studied, smooth composition, like a narrative arranged according to the rules of rhetoric, for besides that mere rhetorical effect, however sublime may be the emotion resulting from it, can never satisfy the religious ideal, such an attempt would argue an ignorance of the inevitable impotence of human language to approach what is due to the perfections of God, and the wiser heart would disdain the presumptuous effort of the understanding. After the first effervescence, all this froth of eloquence, and this inflated wisdom, would be converted into dregs, such as would excite rather loathing than kindle devotion; but as a philosopher remarks, when we have employed the loftiest hyperboles, and exhausted all the figures of symbolic language, when we have dressed metaphysical abstractions in poetic raptures, when we have ransacked whatever things are most excellent among the creatures, and having defecated them and piled them up together, have made that heap but a rise to take our soaring flight from, when instructed as well as inflamed and transported by that inaccessible light which is inhabited by what we adore, we seem raised and elevated above all that is mortal, and say things that surpass the intelligence of men, we can for ever open our lips in such strains of prayer, because,

\* De Modo Orandi libellus.

† Dionys. Hierarch. cap 2.

‡ Hugo Victorin. Annotat. in Cœlest. Hierarch.



although these expressions otherwise applied would be hyperboles, and though they do not express the object, they yet proclaim the fervour of our devotion, and declare not, indeed, what God is, but how much we honour him.

No, the prayers of the church were composed by saints, and what is more, were used by saints and men of the interior life, of intuitive aesthetic ideas, as some philosophers would say, and they knew what they were about; or, rather, they wrote from the inspiration of Him who made and knew what was in man. The human heart during many generations has responded to the chord which they alone knew how to touch. Not from a trivial popular erudition, nor from the school of grammarians, nor from the tribune of rhetoricians, but from a sense and contempt of human things, from a profound care and investigation of wisdom, from a deep consideration of their own misery, and of the divine mercy, did they descend to compose these sacred offices.

The church, it is true, has endeavoured to protect the faithful in the possession of her prayers, unmixed with other inventions, by prohibiting all new litanies in the public worship, excepting with such restrictions as one might hope would be generally sufficient to discourage all attempts of this kind; but it is, perhaps, still rather to be wished than expected, that these modern writers, who never question but that they are in the van of what is termed the march of intelligence, should cease from exercising their talents in this way; for, generally, in proportion to the poverty and ignorance of the mind, there will be a passion for changing and modifying ancient things. Impelled by a desire to do something, a shallow, conceited, restless intelligence will seek to distinguish itself by reforming, as it pretends, the reliques of a less enlightened age; and, indeed, it would almost seem, as if in a certain stage of society, taffeta phrases, silken terms precise, had a greater charm for the cultivated class than the noblest sentences of a Chrysostom, or than the most majestic symbol of the Catholic liturgy.

But to return. Wondrous is the skill with which the church in her offices blends together the ancient testament and the new, the figures and the reality, the promise and the accomplishment, and shows in the infinite variety of her forms, the profound unity of the Christian faith. She speaks, she sings herself. All these voices of prophets, evangelists, fathers, doctors, hymnographers, form a magnificent concert, in which no dissonance wounds the ear, but all is one spirit and one inspiration, and amidst a warmth, an enthusiasm, a tenderness, an astonishing compression of the great characters of the Christian mysteries, and above all, a firm, profound, and wondrously communicative faith.

Admirably has the church evinced her judgment with regard to that greatest of difficulties which used to be treated of by the ancient philosophers, the observing of what the Greeks termed *πρέπον*, the decorum of the Latins. This is evinced in every part of the divine offices and ritual, in which the order of words is suited to the authority, the age, the condition, the place, and the time which are involved. Reader, I dare not give the reins to my discourse as we approach certain confines. Truly, with respect to them, it would be well to return to the ancient discipline of secrecy and the use of doubtful words, which was observed during so many ages, even after the liberty of the church had been ac-

completed. It is well, like Orestes, to have learned from the purifications with which one has sought to remedy his evils, to know when to speak and when to be silent.\* I would walk lightly here. The very ground seems to bleed and suffer. A great mystery is taking place. I see death and passion, and one is more inclined to weep than to admire; but thus much I may observe, as one who to a single ear imparts his thought, that the sublime poetry of the opening dialogue of the holy mass has been remarked by many great authors. This dialogue, says one, "is a true lyric poem between the priest and the catechumen. The former, full of days and experience, groans over the miseries of man, for whom he is about to offer sacrifice. The latter, full of youth and hope, sings the victim by whom he is to be redeemed." When the vaults of our churches resound with the joyful melody of *O filii et filiae*, what heart does not burn at hearing "the King of glory rises from the tomb! who is this angel clothed in white seated at the entrance of the sepulchre? Apostles hasten! happy are those who have believed and have not seen!" Would not this simple chaunt of the church bear a comparison with the grandest creation of poetry? Does it not verify the saying of the ancients, that men are winged by means of words, for by these sublime words is not the soul lifted up, and is not the man raised?

Witness again the prose of Easter, *Victimæ Paschali laudes*. Behold how this song of triumph is lively, rapid, how it carries one with it, how in a few lines it invites to joy, relates the great combat, apostrophises Mary Magdalen as a witness, and makes an act of faith and of prayer to the victorious Christ. "If that be not the genius of lyric poetry," says a French critic, alluding to it, "I know not what is."

But where should one finish if one were to speak of the "*lauda Sion*," the "*adoro te supplex*," the "*stabat mater*," the "*dies iræ*?"—if one were to describe the office of the dead, with its mournful lessons, its awful remembrances, its solemn and heart-piercing tones? When to this majestic poetry and sound, is added the aspect of one of our Gothic churches by night, lighted up, notwithstanding its vastness, so that every mullion of the highest windows of the choir can be traced with all its beauteous tracery against the darkness of the exterior sky, while only the distant vaults of the nave and transepts fly away and bury themselves in mysterious obscurity, as I have seen the sublime Cathedral of Amiens on the night of All-hallows, when the vigils of the dead were sung there, at which an immense multitude assisted till a late hour in profound devotion,—assuredly the impression from the whole on all minds of ordinary susceptibility must be such as no language can adequately describe; it must be like that resulting from some great event of which the memory is indelible. "Let one only represent to himself," says Michelet, "the effect of the lights on those prodigious monuments when the clergy moved in procession through those forests of columns, animating the dark masses, passing and repassing through the long aisles, under those complicated arches, with its rich vestments, its tapers and its chants, when light and sound of unearthly harmony issued from the choir, while the ocean of people responded from the shade below;—there was the true drama, the true mystery, the representation of the

---

\* *Eumenid.* 276.

journey of humanity through the three worlds, that sublime vision which Dante has immortalized in the 'Divina Commedia.'” And on all occasions too what a beauty of solemn form surrounds one in the Church? Those shrines with sacred burning lamps in order long; those altars bright with a tall forest of burning tapers, casting streams of tremulous lustre like the matin star; those banners that move on in bright procession; those angel forms bearing the lights; those lofty things which come so slowly moving towards us, that the bride would have outstript them on her bridal day\*—how does all this purify and exalt the imagination? Can we wonder that it should have seemed to our feeling ancestors like the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending from heaven, prepared as a spouse adorned for her husband, that they should have expected to hear that great voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and he will be their God? See those beautiful little chapels of our Lady or of the patron saint on each side of the nave, where every object is so admirable and delicate that those who assist within may imagine themselves to be in a paradise. There amidst these bright symbols, from this cloud of fragrant incense, sweetly rises the day to Catholic youth, and no marvel that the remaining hours should flow on in innocence and joy. No marvel, I say, that the Church, as she desires in her prayer, should receive spiritual augmentation from what she gains in material space, and that an eternal habitation for the majesty of God, of living and chosen stones, should be prepared out of the supplicant people. Look again, and let your eyes rest upon those children, who stand or kneel clad in white robes, and with lights in their hands, so like things enskyed and sainted, so expressive of purity, of obedience, and love, that if angels were to descend visibly, one concludes that assuredly it would be in such a form. Fix them still upon that altar, and mark what is passing before it. How beautiful is every thing! how serene! as if the harmonious wisdom of the Church had actually moulded the external form of matter to its own perfection. Is not here that beauty manifested which Plato said was nothing but the splendour of truth? Catholicism has produced all the lovely forms which order can assume within the narrow limits of space and time. Mark the celestial habits and reverence of the grave wearers. O the sacrifice! how ceremonious, solemn and unearthly it is in the offering! It fills one's breast with the emotions described by Dante, when, after telling of the sweet strains of Paradise, he adds,—

“And what I saw was equal ecstasy;  
One universal smile it seem'd of all things;  
Joy past compare; gladness unutterable;  
Imperishable life of peace and love:  
Exhaustless riches and unmeasur'd bliss.”†

These impressions are not only thus profound and inspiring, but they are also durable, for to the mind that has once experienced them, all external beauty ever afterwards seems to be only a homage to the mystery of divine love. Every object in nature seems to merit the appellation which the Church applies to the element in the benediction of her

\* Dante, *Purg.* xxix.

† *Parad.* xxvii.



fonts, "hæc sancta et innocens creatura;" and, in some way or other, serves to bring the mind in presence of those mysteries which are the fountain of all joy. The separation between spirit and matter is thus removed, and all seems resolved into the unity of an harmonious creation, of which every part is good, so passing lovely, mind cannot follow it, nor words express its infinite sweetness.

But let us investigate these things with unmoved bosom, as one who only chronicles the past. The altar erected by Angelbert, Archbishop of Milan, in the year 830, in the Ambrosian Basilica, was valued at thirty thousand pieces of gold. The whole front was composed of solid gold, studded with innumerable jewels, and over it stood twelve images of silver gilt, representing the Apostles.\* That in the Basilica of St. Mark, at Venice, was composed of alabaster and porphyry, and tablets studded with precious stones.† Yet every church possessed what Ughelli mentions in describing the Cathedral of Naples, festive coverings for solemn days, which could add beauty even to these altars of gold and jewels.‡ What must have been the splendour on extraordinary occasions when more than usual magnificence was required? The writers of the middle ages, to describe a person struck mute and made forgetful of every thing by one object, say that they felt an impression like that caused by the sight of a high altar at Easter or Christmas; for on these occasions the Church displayed all her treasures in honour of God, and the people used to offer choice flowers and costly vases for receiving them. Then were used those choral elephantine books of such magnitude and weight that it exceeded the strength of a man to support one of them, and of such rich adornment, that they used to be preserved in treasuries, wonderful specimens of art and industry, whether we consider the exquisite loveliness of the painting, the admirable beauty of the writing, or the costly and superb decoration of the exterior. In that vast and well filled choir of the dome at Florence, a light darkened on all sides but one, streams upon the huge volume over which it is suspended, which seems then from the distant parts of the nave, like one great flame in that solemn assembly, as if it were literally illuminated by that mighty book. The ancient sacerdotal vestments, besides the general distinctions of colour, frequently bore in rich embroidery, either a representation of the mystery of the particular festival on which they were used, or as those in the monastic Church of the Escorial, an image of some saint or of the instrument of his martyrdom, in order to commemorate a patron or local founder. Generally from those white vestments denoting the unsullied lustre of a mystic and immortal joy, to those which are red from the memory of human evils, we can trace the same genius, the same delicacy of conception which designed the ornaments in the stone of the Gothic portal. A chasuble was like the rich splendour of a rose or tulip leaf. The Creator saw man in making the former only imitating his own art. Yet these gave offence to the moderns; as if God who has painted the flowers of the field, and clothed the beasts and fowls of the earth, with such curious and exquisite colours, could be offended at the beauteous vestments of the priest who adores him, who assumes them with prayer, and trembling, and who

\* Italia Sacra, tom. iv. 82.

† Id. v. 1177.

‡ Id. vi. 669.

wears them only out of humble reverence. Many details are extant respecting the pomp of worship in the middle ages. It would seem from an expression of Ives de Chartres, that out of reverence for our Lord, the chalice and paten were generally of solid gold, for he requires that, at least, they should be of silver.\* In the church of Monte Casino there were seven greater, and five lesser chalices of pure gold;† but Saba, in his *Testament*, speaks of silver chalices gilt, which he had brought with him from Greece, for the church of St. Saviano at Messina, to which he also gave three most beautiful thuribles which he had purchased from certain Greeks.‡ In a document of the eleventh century, we read of books bound in gold, and of gold chalices adorned with admirable gems, with an abundance of various inestimably precious ornaments for divine worship, which had been treasured up from ancient times in the great church of Salzburg.§ On two expositors and a ciborium of pure gold, there were reckoned upwards of three thousand of the most precious stones of rare magnitude: one of the expositors wrought with images, was moulded by Archbishop Eberhard de Neunhause, and cast, according to popular report, from a treasure found in Iuberg.¶ In the Cathedral of Naples, in the eighth century, the holy vessels of the altar were of solid gold. Those in St. Mark's Basilica, at Venice, were also of gold covered with gems. Ughelli says, that to describe the sacred ornaments, vestments, and other riches in the church of St. Justina at Padua, would require a volume.\*\* We read of the ancient church at Durham, that in the processions, the prior had a marvellous rich cope of cloth of gold, which he was not able to walk upright with, for the weightiness thereof, but one held it up on every side. On one vestment only of Loretto they counted seven thousand jewels. In the ecclesiastical annals of Sicily, we read of vestments in the churches of Palermo covered with innumerable pearls.†† In an ancient manuscript, which describes the destruction of Catana, by the eruption of Mount *Ætna*, in the year 1169, in which fifteen thousand persons, including the bishop, and a number of the monastic flock perished, the loss of the ecclesiastical ornaments was deemed a part of the calamity not unworthy of commemoration.

“ Unde superbit homo ? Deus una diruit hora  
Turres, ornatus, vestes, cunctosque paratus.”‡‡

Florence could send forth nothing in costliness or beauty superior to those which were procured from her for the Abbey of Westminster, some of which still clothe on solemn days the worthy successors in the priesthood of England. Frequently it happens in this island, that ancient tombs of pontiffs and abbots are broken open, and invariably we find the vestments of the richest texture and of the most beauteous design. Forty persons worked continually during three years under the conduct of Lermينو, a celebrated embroiderer, making vestments for the Cathedral of Strasbourg. This was in a later age, but an enumeration of the gifts of Desiderius, Abbot of Monte Casino, to the church of that

\* Decret. pars ii. c. 131.

† Sicilia Sacra, ii. 1065.

§ Id. 1005.

‡‡ Sicilia Sacra, i.

† Chron. Casinensis, lib. iii. cap. 74.

‡ Germania Sacra, tom. ii. 181.

\*\* Italia Sacra, v. 422; vi. 65.

‡‡ Id. tom. i. 531.

monastery, will convey an idea of the prodigious splendour of public worship in the tenth century.\* In consequence of that profusion of jewels which adorned the altars, as we remarked in a former book, and which is found again here in surveying the vestments and other ornaments employed in the solemn worship, mineralogical studies were then much cultivated. Thus Petrus Diaconus wrote a book, "*De Generibus Lapidum Pretiosorum*," which he dedicated to the Emperor Conrad, and he translated from Greek into Latin, the book of Heva, King of Arabia, on precious stones, addressed to the Emperor Nero, and which the Emperor Constantine had removed from Rome to Constantinople.† Mention has been made of the fragrant odour which filled the holy place on which men need not disdain to philosophize; for who has not experienced the associations connected with it? To how many minds does it recall the sweetest years of mortal existence, the recollections of youth, and the thousand circumstances of early life, which derive such a secret charm from the solemn and beautiful ceremonies of the sacred choir? "More good may be drawn from odours than is drawn," says Montaign, "for I have often perceived that they change me, and act upon my spirits, which makes me approve of what is said respecting the use of incense and perfumes in churches, which is to gladden, excite, and purify the sense, to render us more fit for contemplation." An affecting allusion to this usage of the Church is often met with in the great ascetical writers. "O most benign Lord Jesu Christ," cries one of them, "my consolation and refuge in all my trials and tribulation! O that thou wouldst deign, with celestial light and attending angels, to enter the house of my mind, and from a golden thurible filled with aromatics, to incense all my interior, and to consecrate my heart as a temple of the Holy Ghost, to sign it with the holy cross, to anoint it with the oil of grace, to place there the golden urn with manna, and to attach to my side fixedly the book of thy law, that in that I may study celestial things, and thy divine commandments day and night, so long as I shall be an exile on the earth."‡

Incense, which was used in the Jewish, is of great antiquity in the Christian Church, and it is mentioned with honour in the Scriptures, where it is compared to prayer, of which it is still a symbol. Light was always regarded as a mysterious emblem. Clemens Alexandrinus thinks that man was called by the ancients  $\phi\omega\varsigma$ , from the same word signifying light.|| The lamps and candelabras, of curious workmanship, which were found in the sacred cemeteries of Rome, attest the usage which prevailed in the earliest times at the celebration of the Christian mysteries.§ In the middle ages, the lights in churches were an occasion of wonderful magnificence. We read that, in the time of Charlemagne, in the church of the monastery of Ania, there was a multitude of lamps of pure silver, in the form of a crown, which used to be lighted with oil on the festivals, which so illuminated the choir, that in the night the whole church was as light as in the day; and before the altar there were suspended seven lamps of the most beautiful and astonishing workman-

\* Chronic. S. Monast. Casinens. lib. iii. c. 20.

† Chronic. Casinens. lib. iv. cap. 66.

‡ Thomas à Kempis, *Sermonum*, pars iii. 2.

|| Pæd. lib. i. c. 6.

§ P. Aringhi *Roma Subterranea*, p. 282.



ship.\* Pope Adrian I. in the same age, gave to the church of St. Peter a candelabra, which held, without confusion, thirteen hundred and seventy tapers or lamps. The crowns and chains from which lights were suspended, were often of pure gold or silver.† Two great crowns of silver, from which were suspended thirty-six lamps, hung without the choir before the cross, in the church of Monte Casino.‡ There were there twelve towers of light called Phari, as if to shine over the ocean. Fortunatus, Patriarch of Grao, in the seventh century, gave two crowns of light to the church of that island, which had been desert till the year 565, when Christians first sought an asylum there from the Longobards. In each of these burned an hundred candles.||

Nor was it only during the celebration of the sacred offices that symbolic lights burned; they were maintained perpetually, night and day, before the blessed sacrament, before the images, and before the shrines of the saints;—and a reference to wills, and other documents of the middle age, shows with what zeal devout persons contributed to the expense incurred by them, leaving often their lands to the church for this express purpose. “Pale lamp of the sanctuary,” exclaims a French poet, “why, in the obscurity of the holy place, unperceived and solitary, consumest thou thyself before God? It is not to direct the wing of prayer or of love, to give light, feeble spark! to the eye of Him who made the day. It is not to dispel darkness from the steps of his adorers. The vast nave is only more obscure before thy distant glimmering. And yet, symbolic lamp, thou guardest thy immortal fire, and under the breeze of basilicas, thou dost flicker before every altar, and mine eyes love to rest suspended on this ærial hearth, and I say to them, whom I comprehend not, ye pious flames, ye do well. Perhaps, bright particles of the immense creation, they imitate before his throne the eternal adoration. Is it thus, say I to my soul, that, from the shade of this lower place, thou burnest, a flame invisible in presence of thy God? In the night of the sensible world, I feel that there is a point inaccessible to the obscurity of earth, a dawn on the hills, which will watch all the night long—a star which never sets—a fire which remains unextinguished, unconsumed, in which incense can be at all times enkindled, to ascend in fragrance to heaven.”

The procession with litanies was a solemn symbol, employed in the ecclesiastical offices from remote antiquity, as may be proved from Tertullian. In the first ages, churches were constructed with aisles for the processions, as expressly and constantly as with a sanctuary for the celebration of the eucharist.—

“Densa triumphali video procul agmina pompa,  
Atque hilares placidosque choros.  
Plurima pars niveis, variis pars altera fulget  
Vestibus, auratisque stolis.  
Jam sinuosa leves rapuerunt stemmata venti,  
Jamque micant pia signa crucis.  
Tartareas Christi propellit imago phalanges,  
Et superi properant cives.

\* Vita S. Benedicti Abb. Mabillon, Acta S. Ord. Bened. iv. 1.

† Chronic. S. Monast. Casinensis, in cap. 26, notæ.

‡ Chronic. Casinensis, lib. iii. c. 33.

|| Italia Sacra, tom. v. 1101.

Ordo sacerdotum venerandaque turba canoris  
 Carminibus passim exultant.  
 Jam devota sacris operitur scena viretis,  
 Jam sanctæ resonant voces.  
 Alternis precibus pueri, innuptæque puellæ,  
 Atque senes, juvenesque canunt.”\*

Dante is reminded of such things on beholding a tribe of spirits in the other world :—

——— “Such their step as walk  
 Quires, chanting solemn litanies on earth.”

Behold that solemn procession through the aisles of the Abbey Church of St Germain ! The holy virgins in pure white robes, like very sanctity, and bearing bright tapers in their hands ; crowds of holy laymen, the noble, and the mechanic, side by side, alike humble, alike devout ; the saintly students, the venerable clergy, slowly moving along, singing their pensive melody through the dusky space, shedding radiance as they pass along, while all around them lies in deep darkness. What an emblem is here of the path of the just through earth’s short pilgrimage. O, it is an impressive thing to mark the countenance of each one who glides before you. There are some who walk, rapt like men in sleep, unconscious of all around them, conversant solely with the internal vision, in a rapture of angelic thought. Nicolas Flamel, whom we have so often had occasion to mention as constantly employing painters and carvers to adorn places in Paris with devout figures and inscriptions, caused to be represented, on the cemetery of the Holy Innocents, a procession in sculpture, under which was written,

“Moult plaist à Dieu procession,  
 S’elle est faite en dévotion.”

During the ages of faith, the procession was considered an institution of no small importance, in an intellectual and spiritual point of view. Before those mystic flames, which seem to be mingled with the supernal luminaries,—emblems of that star which never sets—it was thought that the delusive meteors of corrupt passion would die away, and be no more seen. That pious crowd, still increasing as it proceeded, which passed on, walking in such humble guise after the blessed sacrament, was in sooth a sublime spectacle, as exhibiting to the eye of the world a multitude of men who sought to follow their celestial King, hungering and thirsting after him. “*Isti sunt viri sancti, facti amici Dei*,” is the involuntary testimony of all who behold them. Such were the conquerors and friends of God, who, despising the orders of triumphant princes, deserved eternal recompense.

Whether this ghostly triumph—so venerable, from the associations connected with it, so inspiring, from the solemn truths which it symbolically shadowed forth—conduced to sanctify and illuminate the heart, no one, who worthily joined in it, was ever found disposed to question. It was while thus slowly moving along, step by step, with the multitude of believers, having the eyes bent upon the ground, and the ears charmed with an unearthly melody, that men felt their minds impressed with a new sense of the mysterious and supernatural side of life. Then it was

---

\* Card. Bona, de Divina Psalmodia, 289.

that they meditated on the eternal years, contrasted with the little space that remained to them of that mortal existence, the approaching end of which seemed to be proclaimed by the very stones beneath their feet. The earth on which they trod seemed to utter the Homeric lesson,

*οἷ' ἢ περ φύλλων γένε' ἤ, τοιγ'δε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.\**

Processions, besides these universally observed by the Church, used to be celebrated in particular places, in consequence of the foundations made by private devotion. At Caen it being the custom for every trader in the market to give a penny to God, or more, according to his devotion, each trade selected one member every year, who was to receive this money, and on the day of Pentecost there was made a solemn procession of all the trades, from the Church of St. Peter to the Church of St. Nicholas, and each bore a great taper, to which was attached as many crowns as had been received from that trade in the course of the year, in order, by this public display, to excite the people to mercy and charity to the poor; and after making the circuit of the church and cemetery of St. Nicholas, the procession was to return in the same order, and the tapers were then to be given up to the Hôtel Dieu.†—In the year 1412, at the general procession of the Holy Innocents, there were a hundred thousand Parisians who walked barefooted.—So dear to men in the middle ages were these affecting solemnities, that we find them observed even in camps, between the contending hosts. The description which Tasso gives of the procession before the walls of Jerusalem, is taken from historical facts. Here first the clergy are seen leading the van, followed by the mighty duke, walking alone, after the manner of princes; then come the barons and knights, two by two, all chanting the litany, invoking the blessed Trinity, and Christ's dear mother and St. John, the holy angels with the elected twelve, the martyrs, confessors, and those whose writings teach the certain path that leads to heavenly bliss, and hermits also, with cloistered nuns, who pray upon their heads. Singing thus with easy pace, thus ordered they pass along—while the deep caves and hollow mounts give round about them a thousand echoes.—

“It seem'd some choir, that sung with art and skill,  
Dwelt in those savage dens and shady ground;  
For, oft resounded from the banks, they hear  
The name of Christ and of his mother dear.  
Upon the walls, the Pagans, old and young,  
Stood hush'd and still, amated and amazed  
At their grave order and their humble song;  
At their strange pomp and customs new they gazed;  
And when the show they had beholden long,  
An hideous yell the wicked miscreants raised,  
That with vile blasphemies the mountains hoar,  
The woods, the waters, and the valleys roar.  
But yet with sacred notes the hosts proceed,  
Though blasphemies they hear and cursed things;  
So with Apollo's harp Pan tunes his reed,  
So adds hiss where Philomela sings.  
Nor flying darts nor stones the Christians dread,  
Nor arrows shot, nor quarries cast from slings;

\* Il. vi. 146.

† De Bourgueville Recherches et Antiq. de Normandie, liv. ii. 40.



But with assured faith, as dreading naught,  
The holy work begun to end they brought.”\*

With respect to the material grandeur of these spectacles, some idea may be formed by those who have visited Catholic countries even in our times. At the procession in Milan on St. Charles's day, several vast antique crucifixes, of solid silver, covered with gold and jewels, and vast candlesticks, of gothic and most exquisite workmanship, are borne along. In the year 1191, took place the consecration of the Church of St. Mary de Flumine, at Ferentinum, which is a town in old Latium, upon a hill near the Latin way. In the procession were borne numerous lighted torches, twenty silver thuribles, twelve silver crosses, and four reliquaries.† To observe what a sense was generally entertained of the symbolic meaning of the procession, we should peruse the ancient writings, and the discourses which were on such occasions addressed to the people, many of which contain passages of extraordinary beauty. “Interior processions we should always make,” says Richard of St. Victor, “but chiefly in this solemnity which is presented before us.”‡ St. Bernard speaks as follows:—

“The procession which we are about to celebrate, supplies us with many subjects for remark. We are this day about to celebrate a procession, and shortly after it we shall hear the passion. What means this strange conjunction, or what were our Fathers' thoughts in adding the passion to the procession? For the procession represents what was done this day, and why is the passion added which did not follow till the sixth feria? Wisely is the passion added to the procession, that we may learn to place no confidence in any joy of this world, since sorrow is the end of gladness, and that our prosperity may not slay us like fools, but that in prosperous we may be mindful of evil days, as also conversely. For the present scene is mixed with both, not only to secular men, but also to spiritual. Therefore, we have to imitate our Lord's humility in the procession, and his patience in the passion. But why did our Lord wish to have the procession, when he knew that his passion would so soon follow? Perhaps, that the passion might be more bitter which had been preceded by the procession. O! what a contrast between ‘tolle, tolle, crucifige eum;’ and ‘Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini, osanna in excelsis.’ What a contrast between ‘King of Israel,’ and ‘We have no king, but Cæsar.’ What a contrast between the green branches and the cross, between the flowers and the thorns; between strewing their own vestments for him and stripping him of his own and casting lots for them! And now in this procession to-day there are those who go before, those who follow our Lord and those who walk by his side. The first are they who prepare the way for the Lord to your hearts, who guide you and direct your steps in the way of peace. The second are those who, being conscious of their own weakness, follow devoutly and tread in the footsteps of those that walk before. The third, who adhere to his side, are those who chose the best part, who live only to God, and consider his pleasure. But behold all are in the procession of our Lord, and no one sees his face; for those who go before are engaged in preparing the way,

\* xi. 11.

† Italia Sacra, i. 675.

‡ Sermo in Die Paschæ.

solicitous about the dangers of others, and they who follow cannot by any means see his face. Those who are at his side can sometimes see him, but only by glances and not constantly or fully, so long as they are on the way. Thus it must be, for no man shall see me and live. I shall not be seen, he says, in this life; no one shall see my face in this way, in this procession. Therefore, may he of his goodness enable us so to persevere in his procession while we live, that in that great procession when he will be received with all that are his by God the Father, we may deserve to enter the holy city with him, who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.”\* Again, on the festival of the Purification, he speaks of the procession thus. “In the procession of this day, we shall walk two by two as a sign of fraternal charity and social life. A solitary person intruding himself would disturb the procession, and trouble both himself and others, symbolical of those who separate themselves, caring not to observe the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. We shall all carry lighted tapers in our hands, lighted from the holy fire of the altar, and these represent good works; and that humility may be practised, the last are first, and the first last in the procession, for the boys and those of least honour are to walk before. And in the procession no one can stand still, but all must continue to move forwards as in the way of life, where nothing can remain in the same state.”† Thus speaks Bernard, and thus through his lips speak the ages of blessed thirst, so that this solemn walk of choirs was grateful alike to understanding and to sense.

---

#### CHAPTER IV.

AFTER considering the divine symbolism of the sacred offices, we are naturally led to philosophize respecting the ecclesiastical music which was found such sweet medicine to moderate the thirst of human souls, and prepare them for the refreshing streams of justice. Music, like painting as a fine art, is a new art, for as we owe perspective painting and the infinite exaltation of the modern over the ancient art to the paintings of the Catholic Church, so we are indebted to the ecclesiastical musicians for harmony. Approach we now to contemplate altars bright with amaranth and gold, and vaults that breathe ambrosial fragrance, and holy words that in the blessed spirits elect, sense of new joy ineffable diffuse, and sacred song that wakens rapture high; no voice exempt, no voice but well can join melodious part, such concord is in faith. In all ages men have been convinced that music was a thing divine and belonging to the worship of God. Maximus of Tyre enfor-

---

\* Dominic. in Ramis Pal. Serm. ii.

† Id. in Purificat. Serm. ii.

ces this doctrine.\* Strabo says, that music is the work of God.† Pythagoras, that he might keep his mind always imbued with the divinity, used always to sing and play on the harp before going to rest, and in the morning. He also ascribed importance to it in respect of education.‡ Socrates, when of venerable age, did not disdain to learn the principles of music with boys. Plutarch, who calls it the universal science,|| says, that the Lacedemonians paid more regard to music than to their food. The music of the ancients, which began in temples, was regarded as the source of civilization. Plato and Aristotle maintained that music was an essential part of the education of youth.§ Plotinus thought that by music men were led to God. Quintilian says, that music is conjoined with the knowledge of divine things, that the wisest men were studious of music, and that it formed part of the education of youth from the days of Chiron and Achilles to that time.\*\* Cicero observes the general opinion of the Greeks, that the highest erudition was in music, so that Epaminondas the prince, he says, of Greece, was skilled in playing upon the lute and in singing, and Themistocles when he declined to play at a banquet was considered on that account less learned. Whoever was ignorant of music was regarded as deficient in learning.†† The early fathers remarked the excellence of music in its adaptation to the human soul. "The science of music," says St. Augustin, "is probably the science of moving well the mind."‡‡ "To sing and to chant psalms," saith he, "is the business of lovers."||| "Nothing," says St. Chrysostom, "so exalts the mind and gives it as it were wings, so delivers it from the earth, and loosens it from the bonds of the body, so inspires it with the love of wisdom, and fills it with such disdain for the things of this life, as the melody of verses and the sweetness of holy song."§§ The vague, indetermined, mysterious character of music defies all exact interpretation, but for that very reason it admirably represents the interior man. Whether it throws the soul into a revery full of noble melancholy, or into an enthusiastic rapture, no art harmonizes so marvellously with the sentiment and idea of infinity, and with the relations of God and man. "Music, like poetry, is a longing desire which charms and even seizes upon the soul with a magical power. In music," continues Frederick Schlegel, "as in other arts, the higher and the earthly, like soul and body, are bound to one another. The heavenly longing desire and the earthly are often inseparably blended together in one tone, as is the case also with all the first sentiments of youth."¶ How beautifully does Shakspeare represent the effect of even the lightest music upon minds contemplative, in the scene between Amiens and Jacques, when the former repeats that song which begins with

"Under the greenwood tree,  
Who loves to lie with me,  
And tune his merry note,  
Unto the sweet bird's throat."

And Jacques says, immediately, "More, I pr'ythee more." "It will

\* xxi. † Lib. x. Geograph.

§ Conviv. de Legibus, vii. Politic.

†† Lib. i. de Musico.

¶ Philosophie der Sprache, 124.

‡ Jamblich. 15.

\*\* Lib. i. 10.

|| Serm. 33.

|| Lib. de Music.

†† Tuscul. i. 2.

§§ Hom. in Ps. 41.



make you melancholy, Monsieur Jacques," replies Amiens. "I thank it," cries his friend. "More, I pr'ythee more. I can make any song yield melancholy. More, I pr'ythee more." Still the other is loath. "My voice is rugged, I know it cannot please you." The answer is the same. "I do not desire you to please me; I do desire you to sing; come, more; another stanza." The philosophers of the middle age think it not too much to affirm that a love of music has a connection with a love of justice; for the pleasure of music arises from finding that every thing moves according to order, and that there is no disarrangement or discord. In fact, as Novalis says, "All enjoyment is musical,"\* and for the same reason, since the original thirst of man is for justice. Great were observed to be the effects of music. St. Albertus, a monk, while he was a secular in the world, being present at a certain play with its music respecting the life and conversation of St. Theobald, was suddenly by divine grace so filled with compunction, that he began from that hour to lead a life of great sanctity.† St. Ansbertus, a monk, and Bishop of Rouen, while as yet a layman, and living in the court of the king, hearing some instruments of music, said within himself, "O glorious Creator, what will it be to hear that song of the angels who love thee, which is to sound for ever in the celestial courts! How sweet and admirable will be that chorus of saints when you ordain that the sounds of a mortal voice, and the skill of human instruments, should be able to excite the minds of the hearers to praise thee devoutly, their God and Creator." When I was at Rome, I heard a young and noble Englishman, a man of blessed life, and now of saintly order, express the same feelings on hearing music in the street. Gerard says of St. Adalhard, Abbot of Corby, that he was constantly of such a sweet intention towards God, that if while assisting at the royal councils he heard melody, he had it not in his power to refrain from tears; for all sweet music seemed to remind him of the sweetness of his celestial country.‡ St. Dunstan, while a youth, withdrew from the world to devote himself to music, and to the meditation of celestial harmony.|| "They who love God," says St. John Climacus, "are excited by secular and spiritual songs and melody to joy, and divine love, and to tears, although they who are addicted to pleasure may collect from them matter of perdition for themselves.§ Osbert, in his life of St. Dunstan, relates that the holy archbishop had recalled many from the turbulent affairs of the world by means of his musical science. Brother Pacific, one of the first disciples of St. Francis, had been celebrated while in the world for his musical science, and the holy Father employed him to instruct the other brethren in singing the hymn of the Sun, which he had composed in honour of God; for he wished that they should always sing it after their sermons, and that they should tell the people they were God's musicians, and that they wished no other payment for their music but to behold them doing penance for their sins. Grievous enmity existed between the bishop and the governor of Assitium. St. Francis deputed two of his friars to present themselves before the governor, and invite him on

---

\* *Schriften*, ii.

‡ *Vita S. Adalhardi*. Mabillon *Acta S. Ord. Bened. Sæc. iv.* p. 1.

|| Osbert, *Monachus Cantuar. in ejus vita*.

† *Surius*, 7 Aprilis.

§ *Grad. xv.*

his part to repair, with as many persons as he could collect, to the bishop's house, whither he had deputed two others to apprise the bishop. When all were assembled, the friars said, "Lords and brethren, beloved in Jesus Christ,—Father Francis being prevented by sickness from coming here in person, has sent us here to sing a canticle which he has composed, and he implores you to listen to it devoutly." Then they commenced this song, to which St. Francis had added a strophe appropriate to the occasion. The governor heard them with hands joined, and eyes raised to heaven, weeping. When they had finished, he professed his desire to be reconciled with the bishop, who on his side only lamented that he had not been the first to show an example of humility. Then they embraced and kissed each other, mutually demanding forgiveness, and filling the beholders with wonder and joy.\*

"Music," says Cassiodorus, "dispels sorrow, soothes anger, softens cruelty, excites to activity, sanctifies the quiet of vigils, recalls men from shameful love to chastity, by the sweetest rapture expels the diseases of the mind, and soothes, through the medium of the corporeal senses, the incorporeal soul."† They who would dwell on this subject, may consult Clemens Alexandrinus; ‡ Justin Martyr; § Bede; § John of Salisbury, ¶ who pays a tribute to the noble nature and admirable properties of music; William of Paris;\*\* and Athanasius Kircher Fuldensis.†† Many and interesting are the reflections of the ancients with respect to the principles and application of music. Plutarch explains a saying of antiquity, "Love taught music,"‡‡ on the ground adopted by the Platonists, who taught that love was the master of all arts and sciences. Theophrastus says that music has three principles—"grief, pleasure, and the divine inspiration." If our space were not too limited, one would be tempted to collect some interesting details respecting the different kinds of ancient music, and the use to which each was deemed applicable. It appears that the Dorian, which corresponded with our church music generally, was deemed proper for the education of youth; that the Hypodorian, which seems to answer more particularly to our vesper strains, was rather soothing; and therefore the Pythagoreans used it in the evening to appease the cares of the mind, though Aristotle styles it magnificent, constant and grave.‖‖ It was called Hypodorian as being not greatly Dorian. The Phrygian music was martial; §§ and, what is very remarkable, both Plato and Aristotle interdicted its use to youth. The Hypophrygian was adulatory and attractive, and suited to unstable minds. Aristotle says that its effects are like intoxication.¶¶ The Lydian was the music of pleasure; and yet such is the inherent dignity of man's soul, from which nothing can totally banish the remembrance of its fall, that, as Plato asserted, it was sad and plaintive.(\*). It was this which was said to resound in the Elysian fields.(†) So associated is melancholy with the highest joy, that the Hypolydian was decidedly tearful, and said to arise from devotion and gladness; the Mixolydian

\* Les Chroniques des Freres Mineurs, liv. i. c. 116.

† Lib. ii. Var. Ep. 40.

‡ Stromat. vi. ¶ Qu. 107. § Lib. de Musica.

¶ Lib. i. c. 6, Policrat.

\*\* De Universo, pars ii. cap. 20.

†† Lib. iii. Artis Magnet.

‡‡ Sympos. lib. i. ¶¶ See 19th problem.

§§ Clemens Alex. Strom. vi.

¶¶ See 19th problem.

(\*) III. de Repub.

(†) Propert. lib. iv. Eleg. vii.

produced a double effect, for it excited men to joy, but immediately recalled them to sadness. It was this which the ancients used in tragedy. These seven tones were all recognized by the Pythagoreans.\* In accordance with St. Augustin and the early Fathers, St. Thomas, and all the noble geniuses of the middle age, are the faithful echo of the ancients, and agree with their opinion respecting the divine origin of music. The importance attached to it in the middle ages, may be collected from various contemporary authors, such as Rabanus Maurus;† Isidore;‡ Rupertus Abbas;§ an author mistaken for Bede; and Richard of St. Victor.§ Vincent of Beauvais says that music is joined not only to speculation, but also to morality, for that there is nothing so proper to humanity as to be affected by it, and that no age is exempt from its influence; \*\* and John of Fulda says, that all the Roman pontiffs were either musicians or men who delighted in music. Raban goes so far as to say, "This discipline is so noble and so useful, that he who is without it cannot properly fulfil the ecclesiastical office. 'Quicquid enim, (he adds,) in lectionibus decenter pronuntiatur, ac quicquid de psalmis suaviter in ecclesia modulatur, hujus disciplinæ scientia ita temperatur, ut non solum per hanc legimus et psallimus in ecclesia, immo omne servitium Dei rite implemus.' For musical discipline," he continues, "is diffused through all the arts of our life in this manner. First, if we keep the commandments of our Creator, and with pure minds observe his law; for it is proved that whatever we speak, or with whatever sentiment we are internally moved by the pulsation of veins, is associated by musical rhythm with the virtues of harmony. If we observe a good conversation, we prove ourselves associated with this discipline; but when we act sinfully we have no music."†† "Sine musica," says Isidore, "nulla disciplina potest esse perfecta: nihil enim est sine illa."‡‡ In the middle ages, kings had their musicians, great nobles their musicians, towns their musicians. Music was deemed part of liberal erudition. It was treated upon by Boethius, Severinus, Berno, Otho, St. Gregory the Great, Theogerus, Cosmas, St. John Damascenus, Guido of Arezzo, and many others.|||| In the fourth century, the ecclesiastical music became more artificial than it had been in the infant church; §§ but it was St. Gregory the Great who was the chief author or promoter of the choral song, called from him Gregorian or Roman, which was propagated throughout the whole western Church. This, which was richer and more variegated than the ancient Gallican psalmody, was a precious remnant of the ancient Greek music, which had retained much of its original beauty. St. Gregory founded a school expressly to teach it, and compiled books with notes to perpetuate it. We find musical skill, joined with exact judgment in divine mysteries, reckoned among the qualities of Leo II. Bishop of Palermo, in the seventh century. (\*) During St. Gregory's time, the choral song was introduced into England by St. Augustin, as John the Deacon relates. Bede is a witness that, in the mon-

\* Card. Bona, de Divina Psalmodia, 431.

† Origin. lib. ii.                      § In lib. Reg. v. 23.

\* Speculum Doctrinale, lib. xviii. cap. 2.

†† Etymolog. lib. iii.

§§ Id. tom. i. p. 240.

† De Inst. Clerical. iii. 24.

§ De Contemplat. v. 17.

†† De Institut. Cleric. lib. iii. cap. 24.

|||| Gerbert, de Cantu et Musica Sacra Præfat.

(\*) Sicilia Sacra, notit. i. 37.



asteries of Britain, the divine office was sung as in St. Peter's at Rome.\* St. Theodore of Canterbury and St. Wilfrid of York were great patrons of this Gregorian song. In the year 747, in the Council of Cloveshoe, there were decrees for its especial cultivation. Charlemagne, who loved every kind of excellence, endeavoured also to promote it throughout the empire, being anxious, as he said, that the Latins should yield in nothing to the Greeks. He was passionately fond of the ecclesiastical chant, and used to sing himself in the church, morning, noon, and night, but only in an under tone, as Eginhard relates. The school of Metz, for ecclesiastical song, had flourished under Pepin. Charlemagne sent two clerks to Rome, that on their return to Metz they might be able to teach the Roman song. From Metz it was propagated over all France.

The names of some celebrated musicians of this time have come down to us. And modern writers, like Sir John Hawkins, though Protestants, pay profound homage to the genius of those ancient monks and bishops who were the conservators of music during so long an interval.†

Notwithstanding this extraordinary zeal for the cultivation of music, the relative importance of virtues was not overlooked. Charlemagne condemns some who prefer a clerk or monk that sings well to one that lives justly and holily. For though, he adds, musical discipline is not to be despised, yet if both merits cannot be obtained, it seems more tolerable to us to bear imperfection in singing than imperfection in living.‡ In the tenth century, music was in the highest repute. The greatest masters, such as Remi of Auxerre, Hubald of St. Amand, Gerbert, and Abbon, taught it with as much care as the highest science. “*Est decus humanæ naturæ musica summum, quam qui scire negat, ipsum se scire negabit,*” says a manuscript poem in the Vatican, written in the time of Otho the Great. In England, celebrated for musical science, were St. Adelm in the eighth and St. Dustan in the tenth century, Eadmer, a chanter of the Church of Canterbury, in the time of St. Anselm, Simeon at Durham, Joannes Thannatensis, a great mathematician, at Canterbury, Wolston at Winchester, Thomas Walsingham at St. Albans, William Somerset, in the monastery of Malmsbury, and William of Evereux, treasurer of Henry I. In France, the musical science was celebrated of Geoffrey of Tours, St. Odo of Cluny, Peter, chanter and doctor of the University of Paris, and Adulphus, raised from being a chanter to the episcopal see of Autun, an example not unfrequent in history. Pope Urban IV. in the thirteenth century, had been educated among the children of the choir of a cathedral; and Lebeuf mentions a certain cardinal who had risen from the same condition in the church of Lyons. Orderic Vitalis says that the Abbot Durandus, having a great knowledge of music, enriched the divine office with new pieces, and with new and very melodious airs. In Ireland there seems to have been no regular ecclesiastical chant introduced till the twelfth century. St. Bernard says that St. Malachy was the first to establish it there, “according to the custom of the whole world.” John the Monk, of Fulda, a disciple of Rabun Maur, was a poet and musician, “who first composed, with varied modulation, artificial song in the church in Germany—a country

\* Lib. iv. de Gest. Angl. c. 18.

† Gen. Hist. of the Science and Practice of Music.

‡ Capital. ii. An. 811. Baluz. tom. i.

in which it took such deep root, that in no other part of Europe was it more assiduously cultivated." Mabillon, in his *Itinerary*, speaks of the great importance which the Germans attached to music in the church; whereas, he says, the French in his time regard figured music as an impediment to devotion. But it was an obscure and devout recluse who prepared a new epoch in the history of music. This was Guido of Arezzo, a Benedictine monk of the Abbey of Pomposa, in the Duchy of Ferrara, who, in the eleventh century, was the author of the present system of musical notes, for which he was so greatly honoured, that Pope John XX. sent three messengers to invite him to come to him. He published his *Micrologus* about the year 1028. In a contemporary work he is entitled "*Musicus et monachus, nec non eremita beandus*."—In the prologue to his work, and in his letter to Michael, he speaks of the success of his invention with great humility. "Since my natural condition, and the imitation of the good, made me diligent, I began, among other studies, to instruct boys in music. At length the divine grace was with me, and some of them, by the use of our notes, learned, within the space of a month, to sing at sight new and most difficult pieces, so that it furnished a spectacle to many.—Since posterity will be able, with the greatest ease, to learn the ecclesiastical chant, which cost me and all before me so much pains, I trust that I and you, and the others who assisted me, may obtain eternal salvation, and, by the mercy of God, remission of our sins, or at least, some prayers from the charity of so many. For if they used to intercede with God so devoutly for their masters, from whom they could scarcely, in ten years, obtain an imperfect knowledge of singing, how will they not pray for us and for our assistants, who in the space of a year, or at the most, within two years, can make them perfect singers."

With respect to the merits of the music of the middle ages, it is certain that it had arrived at a very high degree of perfection. The love of God can supply and surpass all things. The most sublime elevation to which the soul can attain, becomes also, in relation to art, an inexhaustible source of celestial inspiration; for that which is most admirable in music, is derived from the sentiment of religion. In comparison, therefore, with the productions of the old Catholic school, modern science must stand mute. What, in fact, can any secular academy do to encourage music, comparable to a church, where the voices of three thousand faithful are to mingle in the hymn of lofty praises, which is to be heard with ravishment by the glorified choirs of heaven? On this ground, the importance of the musical schools which were in cathedrals, where children were instructed, has been pointed out by recent authors.\* Truly, it would require a different tongue from mine to speak of all the musical beauties in the sacred offices. The plain chant in the Holy Week, irresistibly affects the soul with a sadness unutterable. That of the "*Stabat*," places the blessed Mary before our eyes, as if with the pencil of Raphael; that of the "*Miserere*," moves the soul to its centre; that of the funeral office, is terrific like the voice of death, sublime like the angel's announcement of resurrection. The admirers of the wonders

---

\* Sur l'Origine de la Maîtrise des Enfants de Chœur de la Basilique Metrop. de Paris Mag. Encyclop. tom. v.

of art flock to the Sextine Chapel, at Rome, to behold the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo, but in every country of the world, one may turn pale with fear and admiration before a still greater work, a composition of still more marvellous energy, before the "*dies iræ*," which is sung over the dead man's bier. "If a musician were asked to compose a piece without accompaniment, without either rhythm or modulation, and to confide the execution to the rude voice of some parish singer, and on these conditions to create the sublime, where," says a modern French critic, "is there an artist that would accept the wager? Nevertheless, this is what has been realized by some poor monks, whose names have not even come down to us, but in whom faith and piety have been able to accomplish what genius would not have had courage to attempt."

The religious houses have always proved themselves the asylums of the Muse. Jomelli, Gluck, and Mozart, sought advice in music from the Franciscan friar Martini, of Bologna, who formed a musical library of seventeen hundred volumes, and who is said amidst modern corruptions to have preserved in his compositions all the dignity of the ancient style. The music as well as the poetry of the Catholic Church seem like a faint echo of that primitive language, in which man spoke to God in the state of innocence, the sounds of which can revive in some manner those powers of sentiment and virtue, which the Creator placed in his heart. In the middle ages men were scrupulous in adhering to the great traditions of art in the composition of music. Thus Letaldus says of himself, on composing music for the feast of St. Julian, that "he was unwilling to depart from the similitude of the ancient song, lest he should produce either a barbarous or a novel melody. For the novelty of those musicians does not please me," he adds, speaking like Plato, "who make use of such dissimilitudes, that they seem to disdain to follow the old authors." To the same effect speaks Hugo of St. Victor, "*Non enim decet, ut cantus et usus ecclesiasticus fieri debeat secundum arbitrium diversorum, sed firmiter servandus est secundum scripta et instituta majorum.*" The Psalms of David were tuned to that Dorian harmony which sounded forth in the hymn of Terpander, the antiquity of which music is remarked by Clemens Alexandrinus;\* and as Muller observes, a manly character was always attributed even to the Dorian dialect. St. Bernard, in his letter to the Abbot Ærremacens, describes what ought to be the style of Church music, "full of gravity, being neither lascivious, nor rustic. Sweet without being frivolous, soothing to the ear, but so as also to move the heart. It should appease sadness, mitigate anger, and not diminish but fecundate the sense of the words." There was no affectation or levity in the ecclesiastical music of the middle ages. "With the canticles and hymns of the Church," says Cardinal Bona, "we console this solitude of our exile until we come to our celestial country, when we shall sing that new immortal song, without any mixture of grief." For at present, as there are no joys without some misery, so, as the Abbot Paschasius Radbertus says, "there is no song found without lamentation: for songs of pure joy belong to the heavenly Sion, but lamentations to this our pilgrimage." The Church

---

\* Stromat. vi. 11.



was so impressed with a sense of the importance of music being adapted to the Catholic philosophy, that all music composed by heretics was prohibited from being used in the Church by a synod in the year 1567. In fact, Catholic music is the sister of Catholic manners. It is the expression of faith, hope, and charity: it is the voice of penance, of simplicity, and love. However rich, however ravishing, this was its essential character. What musicians were those who composed the sublime masses which raised souls to heaven, in which the music consisted entirely in a simple phrase of the chaunt in an artless and even popular air, but which, directed by all powerful harmony to suit the different parts of the mass, could express so many various passions! At the "kyrie," those of submission and pity; at the "gloria in excelsis," those of admiration; at the "passus," suffering; at the "resurrexit," joy; at the "agnus Dei," gratitude and peace. These were the inspirations of men in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a Dufai de Chimai, a Binchois de Paris, an Ockegehem of Bavaria, a Leteinturier of Nivelles, a Josquin of Cambray. These great musicians of the school of Cambray, instructed all the north of France. Artificial skill is not art. The moderns, as a German philosopher remarks, "have cultivated more and more the luxury of harmonic accompaniments and instrumental concord, but only to promote the phantastic interest of a confused entertainment. The best judges sigh after the simple elevation of the ancient style, and recognise their chief masters in the first composers of the old simple harmonies of the Church."\* Under the inspiration of faith, art was a great and holy thing. It was the reflection of God. It was the invisible world, the soul world. Palestrina and Mozart composed figured music equal in solemnity and feeling to the noblest tones of the Gregorian chaunt. They created melodies which should never be sung excepting on one's knees: the beautiful simplicity of the ancient Church chaunts so struck Purcell when he began to study them, that he exclaimed, "surely this must have been composed at the gates of heaven where is such melody, as but to hear, for highest merit were an ample meed."† Under the influence of Catholicism, poetry and music sent forth sounds such as the ear of man had never before heard. Sooth no tongue can be adequate to give an idea of the impression produced by the plain song of the choir. It is full of poetry, full of history, full of sanctity. While the Gregorian chaunt rises, you seem to hear the whole Catholic Church behind you responding. It exhales, says Générault, a perfume of Christianity, an odour of penitence, and of compunction, which overcome you. No one cries how admirable! but by degrees the return of those monotonous melodies penetrates one, and as it were impregnates the soul; and if to these be added personal recollections a little sad, one feels oneself weep, without ever dreaming of judging, or of appreciating, or of learning the airs which one hears. In respect to art, one may pronounce without hesitation, that men such as Æschylus describes, who never in their hands bear the olive branch, having lost the faculty of prayer, the thrilling emotion in presence of the Father and Creator of the world, who, in short, experience nothing but ordinary sensations when they hear the chaunts of the Church, must be degraded beings,

---

\* Fries. 241.

† Dante, par. xiv.

insensible to the magnificence of nature, deaf to the nightingale or to the murmur of the woods, dead to poesy and to music, and susceptible of no enthusiasm, (man must desire something with ardour) but for objects disgusting and absurd.

Organs, whether hydraulic or pneumatic, were nearly the only instruments used in the churches in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, all others being rejected in consequence of abuse and the fear of theatrical effect.\* Some writers, among whom was our Ælred of Rievaulx,† complained of excess in the use of organs, though in the same age, Peter the Venerable, of Cluny, was defending the use of them against the Petrobrusians. The sacred Psalmist had expressly desired men to take up the harp and the cymbal, which judgment was more than sufficient to counterbalance the opinion of isolated philosophers. St. Augustin had lamented the blindness of the Manichæans in rejecting sacred music, saying, "that they knew not these medicines, and that they rage against the antidote by which they might be healed." The first organ which appeared in Europe was sent as a present by Constantine Copronymus, to Pepin, King of France, in the year 757. This was placed by him in the church of St. Corneille, at Compiègne. The secret of the construction of these steam organs is now entirely lost. The first organ on the present principle which was seen in the west, was that which Louis-le-Débonnaire placed in the church of Aix-la-Chapelle. It is an organ of this kind which is mentioned in the annals of Fulda, in the year 828. At the close of the ninth century many skillful organ builders were drawn to Rome by Pope John VIII. In the tenth century, an organ of this description was placed in the Abbey of Westminster. Walafrid Strabo, describing the church of Aix-la-Chapelle, mentions a surprising instance of the effect of the wonderful organ which was in it; for he says, that a woman expired through rapture and surprise at the sweetness of its sound.

" Dulce melos tantum vanas deludere mentes  
Cœpit, ut una suis decedens sensibus, ipsam  
Femina perdiderit vocum dulcedine vitam."

This organ was made by George, a priest of Venice, and by a Count Baldric. So delicious and astonishing was the music of organs and flutes, at the consecration of the monastic church of Cava, near Salerno, which was conducted with the utmost pomp, that what between the harmony and the sweet odours which were continually burning, the Serene Duke Roger, and all the people present, thought themselves on the very borders of heaven, as is attested by the chronicle in the archives of that house.‡ In the tenth century, organs used to be supplied from Italy, as appears from the epistles of Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II. The organ in the church of Brunswick was made by Arnold, a priest of the order of St. Francis, and that in the monastery of Trudbert, in the Black Forest, was made by Conrad Sittenger, a Benedictine monk of St. Blaise. As these instruments were made by religious men, so were they chastely touched by their pious and master hands.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it was the custom to place the

\* Gerbert de Cantu Sacra, tom. ii. 99.

† Specul. Charitatis, lib. ii. cap. 23.

‡ Italia Sacra, vii. 368.

organ in the choir; but in the fifteenth century it was deemed preferable to remove them to the western extremity of the nave. The expression of golden mass, "aurea missa," which occurs in the books of the middle ages, implied a mass which was celebrated with extraordinary magnificence. This used to last three or four hours, in consequence of the music.\* Of these solemnities, Dante is reminded when borne along by Beatrice over the waters of Lethe, and led to the symbol of our Saviour:

"The blessed shore approaching, there was heard  
So sweetly, 'Tu asperges me,' that I  
May not remember, much less tell the sound,"†

alluding to the prelude of scattering the holy water, which usage has been always in the Church from apostolic tradition,‡ following the example of Elijah the prophet, who is recorded to have mingled salt with water, that with this infusion the bitter fountains might be converted into sweet.¶ Admirable was the adaptation of the different strains to the successive stages of the sacred mystery. Rupertus says, that the gradual used to be sung in lugubrious tones by men, and that this was followed by children singing in a sweet and joyous manner the Allelujah in a continued strain, protracting a short word, as it is not strange that the human voice should fail in speaking, where the mind does not suffice for thinking. This was so ordained, he says, to express the consolation which awaited mourners according to the sentence, "Beati qui lugent quoniam ipsi consolabuntur;" for this joyful Allelujah carries away the astonished mind, and directs it to that place where will be always life without death, and day without night. The sequence was that breathing or protracting of short words to denote a joy which was greater than one could express. Hence in the ancient sequences, we find unknown words, because, as Cardinal Hugo says, the manner of praising God in our country is unknown to us. But the proses sung before the Gospel, which date from the tenth century, were also called sequences, because the Gospel followed them. The music at the offertory continued while the oblations were received, and until the "Per omnia sæcula," was chaunted by the priest. The Mixolydian song of the preface, which shall be sung long as time endures, is the same as what is found in the most ancient monuments. After the "Sanctus," the choir, or as it was sometimes called, "the school," was silent. This custom prevailed in the time of St. Chrysostom, for he says, that at the consecration all was silence, πολλή ἡσυχία, πολλή σιγή. This is the moment when the priest is left alone at the altar, the deacon and subdeacon falling back, to signify, as Durandus says, how the disciples forsook Christ and fled.§ "The silence which follows the 'Sanctus,'" says Stephanus Augustodunensis, indicates the commemoration of the Passion;" and Rupertus says, "After the joyful acclamation of the people there follows the history of secret grief, which is a cause of profound silence. At the fraction of the Lord's body, the agnus dei, and the dona nobis pacem were solemnly sung by the choir, and at the com-

\* Gerbert de Cantu Sacra, tom. i. 354.

† Purg. xxxi.

‡ Joan. Devot. lib. ii. tit. vii. §. 1.

¶ Hugo de St. Victor de Sacramentis, lib. ii. p. ix. c. 2.

§ Rationale, lib. iv. cap. 34.



munion the sweetest strains of hypolydian harmony were protracted, in order, as the writers of the middle ages say, that the minds of the people who were about to receive the Lord's body might be exalted and tranquillized: or according to the words of a manuscript of the tenth century, "that the faithful about to communicate may inhale, in harmony, him whom they receive within their lips, that they may remember, that he whom they feed upon as corporal food, was crucified dead and buried." For this cause the music continues, that so long as the people are receiving the celestial benediction, their minds, by the charm of melody, may be retained in a state of sweet imprisonment. Finally, the deacon was to chaunt the *Ite missa est*, in a wondrous and a melodious note, in order, as it were, with the last hand to impress on the hearts of the people the memory of what they had seen and heard.\* What a profound sense does all this indicate of the reverence due to the celebration of those tremendous mysteries in which God has placed the fountain of all holiness!

Such then was the ecclesiastical music during the middle ages, till the commencement of its decline, which, according to the natural order of things, was contemporaneous with the decline of faith and the introduction of the new opinions; for a change of manners necessarily superinduced a change in the style of music. In the fifteenth century a profane theatrical music began to be introduced into churches, which was censured by Pope Benedict XIV. in his encyclical letter in the year of the jubilee, and again in his works, in which he called upon all bishops to correct this abuse. Martin Gerbert, a Benedictine monk of the monastery of St. Blaise, in the black forest, composed his great work on sacred music, expressly with a view to stem, if possible, this deplorable evil, which he laments in language of piety and good sense. This abuse of church music gave great scandal at its commencement, as may be seen in the writings of Cornelius Agrippa, Erasmus, and others. It arrived at such a height, that the fathers of the Council of Trent deliberated whether they ought not to abolish all music in the churches excepting the Gregorian. Satan seemed to have again crept into the paradise of man on earth, the house of God. The chaunts were left to profane untutored artists, who substituted a hypophrygian style, consisting of fanciful digressions and exaggerated bombastic flourishes for the ancient simplicity, the dignity of the priesthood, and the reverence of God. Anthems were sacrificed to exhibit the fantastic powers of vain men, who knew nothing of devotion, and who very often were persons who, by the canons, stood excluded from so much as entering the assembly of the faithful. False character, false expression, and frivolity, under the title of brilliant execution, became the prevailing vices of music. This Phrygian, or hypophrygian music, full of insolent grandeur, noisy, tedious, and abounding in insipid repetitions, adulatory and suited to unstable minds, indicated clearly enough the influence of the new spirit which had superseded the reign of faith and Catholic devotion, and might have made men desire even the Lydian strains of the ancients, which, though their music of pleasure, had still, as we have before remarked, the character of sorrow and compassion.

---

\* Rupertus Tuitieenis de Div. Off. lib. ii.

The abuse of organs was strictly prohibited, though in more recent times it has outstript all bounds. St. Charles Borromeo prescribed, that although the organ may be used in hymns, yet every verse is to be distinctly pronounced in the choir;\* that in like manner the credo was not to be performed alternately by the choir and by the organ, but that all of it was to be sung.† At the Synod of Treves, it was required that the organ should be silent at the elevation; and according to the Synod of Cologne, one of the questions to be proposed by the visitors of churches was, "Whether the organ was silent at the elevation." Generally it was enjoined that no verses should be intercepted, and no hymns mutilated by the organ. The pontifical chapel at Rome, to the present day, has constantly rejected the use of organs, as have some ancient churches, such as that of Lyons, and some religious orders, such as that of the Carthusians.

Sweet and intellectual was the harmony of youthful and aged voices joining in saintly chorus, worthy to be of angels heard; but sudden bursts of deafening noise, large floods of sound, mechanically sent forth in impetuous streams, would seem less in accordance with the still small peaceful voice of heaven.

---

## CHAPTER V.

WE have seen the importance ascribed to music generally by the great philosophers of the middle age: but let us now attend to what they deliver in its praise, when directed in particular to enhance the solemnity of the ecclesiastical offices.

"It is good," says St. Bernard, "to glorify God with hymns, and psalms, and spiritual songs. The church chaunt rejoices the minds of men, refreshes the weary, invites sinners to lamentation; for although the heart of secular men may be hard, yet immediately when they hear the sweetness of psalms, they are converted to a love of piety." Dante seems to express this when he describes his hearing in purgatory the strains of dulcet symphony:

————— "Then the ice,  
Congealed about my bosom, turn'd itself  
To spirit and water, and with anguish forth  
Gush'd, through the lips and eyelids from the heart."‡

St. Isidore of Spain speaks to the same effect, recommending music, that those who are not moved to compunction by words, may be excited by the sweetness of melody; for, he adds, quoting the words of St. Augustin, "all our affections have I know not what certain occult connection with diversity or novelty of sounds;" and St. Thomas proves the

---

\* Concil. Mediol. i. p. 2. n. 51.

† Concil. Rhemense, an. 1564.

‡ xxx.

advantage of music on the same ground.\* Of St. Adelard, abbot of Corby, it is related in Bollandus,† that whenever he used to hear a sweeter music in the divine office, he could not refrain from tears. St. Bernard relates that St. Malachy used often to say how greatly he was delighted by the chaunt which he heard in the monastery of Clairvaux. For even in these austere houses of penitence the graces of music were cultivated and appreciated. In the chronicle of the monastery of St. Trudo, it is related how Guntram, when first admitted as a youth into the choir, on the night of the conversion of St. Paul, filled the whole community with astonishment, unmixed with envy, at the sweetness and power of his voice; and with what humility he stood forth, at the command of the abbot, to sing the response which belonged to the office of another, who was of high dignity, which he executed with such power that the abbot, immediately after the office, appointed him to the second place in the choir.‡ “The reading and meditation of the scriptures, and the devout chaunt of psalmody,” says Richard of St. Victor, “strengthen the mind and render the weak firm.”§ Vain is the censure and most shallow the judgment of the moderns, when they say that the poor cannot understand the regular offices. “When men hear sacred song,” says St. Thomas, “although they may not understand the words which are sung, yet they understand for what purpose they are sung, namely, to praise God, and this is sufficient to excite devotion.”§ That ignorance of the poor can hardly be so great an evil, since Dante describes his having experienced it in paradise :

“Unearthly was the hymn which then arose :  
I understood it not, nor to the end  
Endured the harmony.”

And in fact, who has not marked the profound impression which the solemn tones of the Gregorian chaunt make upon the multitude in Catholic lands?—the mystic joy with which it is sung by children, like holy innocents, and by old men, who have in their looks an expression which seems to tell that they know what takes place in paradise? It is not by learning that men can qualify their souls for the reception of that heavenly peace which this holy song visibly inspires. Truly the words of David thus loudly and articulately announced in the majestic Latin of the vulgate, seem an unearthly voice, teaching the wisdom of the eternal ages. Each word makes every heart vibrate as it unfolds the thousand mysteries of human thought, and the secrets of the conscience of man. How this divine voice enables us to see from on high and without fear, all the shocks which make weak mortals tremble, and which drag so often to the abyss, individuals and nations! Oh, who is not moved by the oracular sentence of the psalmist? Amidst the regrets, the agonies, the discouragements of life, who has not felt the power of that great voice which speaks in the depth of night, which touches and which consoles? These Latin psalms and hymns, so sweetly and solemnly sung in the daily offices of the church, in which all classes joined, diffused a complete tone and spirit through society in the middle ages; so that

\* 2. 2. 9. 91. Art. 2.

† Apud Dacher. *Spicileg.* tom. ii. 661.

§ *Serm.* 2. 2. 9. 91. Art. 2.

‡ T. I. Jan. ad. diem xi.

|| In *Cantica Cantic.* c. ii.



the spirit of the psalms, and the spirit of the Gregorian song, became the spirit of the times. It is one thing, as the character of modern ages can testify, to read these things in a library, and it is quite another to hear them announced in majestic strains under the holy vaults of those churches, which no one that has a heart can ever enter without veneration and trembling.

The most familiar office was always new, for the events of the world and the vicissitudes of each man's fortune, every day throw a fresh light upon the words of this eternal wisdom, so that their profound sense seemed never exhausted, but was continually receiving further illustration by the crimes and follies, by the calamities and by the virtues of men; for in the psalms every thing is foreseen and set at rest on its true foundation, even down to the calamities and sophisms of the time we live in. Homer says of his hero, "He was suffering cruel wounds from a diseased heart, but he found a remedy, for sitting down beneath a lofty rock, looking down upon the sea, he sang as follows."\*—If the aspect of rocks and the sound of the waves could inspire consolatory thoughts and prompt a cheering song, what would he have found in our churches had their reviving oracles been heard?

When Francis I. was made prisoner in the park of the Carthusians at Pavia, he desired to be conducted into the church, when the monks at that moment singing Tierce, were chaunting the verse, "*Coagulatum est, sicut lac, cor eorum; ego vero legem tuam meditatus sum.*" The king, disposed to a solemn feeling by his misfortunes, joined them in repeating the next verse. "*Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me, ut discam justificationes tuas.*" O genuine glitter of Eternal Beam, with what sudden force dost thou enlighten the darkness which resteth upon the uncertain and intricate ways of mortal life, pregnant with delusive phantoms!

What counsel, what consolation for humanity amidst its unnumbered woes, in the constant recurrence of those holy psalms, sung by the church, day and night! For what lesson of wisdom and patience, and heroic virtue, did they not teach? Did they not inculcate, as St. Basil says, "the magnificence of fortitude, the exact severity of justice, that temperance, so venerable even in its aspect, the perfection of prudence, the form of penance, the measure of patience and every kind of good?† To observe with what care the profound sense of the different parts of the ecclesiastical office was explained by the doctors of the middle ages, we need only refer to the remarks of Hugo of St. Victor, on the song of the Magnificat, where he shows that it is not without great reason that it is sung with such peculiar veneration by the church.‡

"In the book of Psalms," says St. Ambrose, "there is a medicine of salvation for the human race: the psalm is the benediction of the people, the praise of God, the voice of the church, the confession of faith, the full devotion of authority, the joy of freedom, the cry of rapture; it mitigates anger, it banishes care, it alleviates sorrow, it hails the birth of day, it attends also its decline, it sanctifies the stillness of night. The apostle commands women to keep silence in the church, but they may chaunt the psalm with praise. This is sweet to every age and becoming to both sexes; this old men sing and forget their infirmities; this young

\* Il. vi.

† Præf. in Ps.

‡ Annot. Elucid. Alleg. in Marcum, lib. iii.

men sing and commit no intemperance; youths sing the psalm without danger to their innocence, and maidens without disparagement to their modesty. Children love it, and it even fills infants with admiration. Kings and emperors sing with their people, because the psalm is profitable to all.”\*

Hugo of St. Victor, in a golden little book on the mode of prayer, refutes the objection of those who would deny the fitness of the divine offices, on the ground of their not being composed exclusively in the deprecatory form. “Some,” he says, “are accustomed to ask why, when we wish to pray God for ourselves or others, we sing certain psalms, which neither contain words of petition nor have any relation apparently to our wants,—and moreover, use other parts of Scripture as a prayer, though they have no form of supplication or connection with our state; what advantage arises then from using words which express nothing of what we ought to ask from God? what skills it to sing, ‘Quare fremuerunt gentes,’ or ‘Attendite, popule meus?’ Is it not ridiculous to fancy that we pray when we sing such things?—This is what they say: but whoever diligently considers the nature of prayer, will easily discern how such words avail. This kind of prayer is often found more efficacious than that in which we manifestly and explicitly declare our wants. For there is this difference between supplicating man and God—that man cannot know our necessity unless he be informed of it; whereas God knows it before we ask. Man, therefore, must be informed by our narration; but in prayer to God, narration is unnecessary. Therefore, to speak briefly, when we praise God, whatever be the words used, however prolix, what else do they express but this one thing—that adoring we love him, and that loving we adore him? Similarly, when we treat of our misery before him, whatever be the words, and however prolix, what do they express but that, from our heart, we seek his mercy, and place all our confidence in it? No parts of the Scripture are to be counted alien from the office of prayer, since, whether by insinuation, or inference, or entreaty, or announcement, all parts can infuse the affections of virtue, by means of which we shall pray more effectually than by the mere words of prayer. And who can enumerate all the virtues of the Psalms? Who can number those ignited compunctions of holy affections with which the mind that uses them is kindled in prayer, when the most grateful sacrifice to God is offered up on the altar of the heart?”†

We have already had incidental proof that in the early as in the middle ages, the multitude joined in the choral song of the church.—

“Intonet omnis homo cantica sacra Deo,”

is the line of Cosmas Materiensis, in his poem entitled “The Passion of the Holy Martyrs,” dedicated to Gregory, the monk of Nonantula, and after seven hundred years, discovered among the ancient manuscripts of that abbey.‡ The people joined in the Psalmody of the clergy in primitive times.¶ St. Cæsarius of Arles compelled the laity to join with the religious in singing in the church the divine office, the

\* S. Ambros. Præf. in Psalm.

‡ Italia Sacra, tom. i. 3.

VOL. II.—52

† De Modo Orandi Libellus.

¶ Gerbert, de Cantu Sacra, tom. i. 158.

psalms and hymns, the proses and antiphons: and in the second Council of Vasens, he entreated the people to assemble in the church at matutinal vigils, tierce, sext and nones. In his sermons he exhorts the faithful, that, "despising the bitterness of the world, they would repair to the church, where they may receive the sweetness of Christ." Fortunatus says of St. Germain, Bishop of Paris,—

"Pontificis monitis clerus, plebs psallit et infans."\*

"My brethren," says St. Ephrem, "be assiduous in repairing to the places of our assemblies, whether during the night or at sun-rise, or during the day; whoever you be, of whatever rank, of whatever sex, of whatever condition, hasten to assist at the celebration of the divine mysteries."† Not only clerks, but also laymen, used to meet daily to assist at the divine office,‡ unprevented by the hours of secular life. St. Gregory Nyssen relates in the life of his sister, St. Macrina, that after supper and a familiar conversation with his sister, he went to the church to return thanks to God at the vesper service—for every one used to go to the church at that hour, which the Greeks called *ἐπιλύχνιος*. The English Fathers of the Council of Cloveshoe, in the eighth century, required the faithful laity to assist at the divine psalmody in the church. They call it a medicine for the soul; and they add, "although some one may be ignorant of the Latin words, yet he should supplicantly refer the intention of his heart to those things which are to be asked of God. And after the offices, such a person ought to pray secretly in Saxon, for mercy and remission of his sins, and for the repose of the dead."|| The early canons required the faithful to assist at vespers as well as at mass. In one church at Lugano I observed it was a custom for laymen to go into the choir, and sing the canonical hours like monks. In Verona there were five oratorios, where many youths used to assemble on festivals to recite the hours of the Blessed Mary, after which the Gospel would be explained to them by a priest.§ Young women, in the castles of our ancestors, used to follow the advice of St. Jerome, when he requires that a daughter should recite the hours of matins, tierce, sext, nones, and that with lighted tapers she should offer the vesper sacrifice.\*\* Indeed, the intention of the church is sufficiently seen in the indulgences which she bestows on all the faithful who assist at matins and lauds, and at the first and second vespers, as also at the lesser hours of Christmas,†† and Corpus Christi.‡‡ At the consecration of the Church of St. Mary at Ferentinum, in the year 1191, the office began in the evening, at which assisted a great multitude of laics as well as clergy from Campagna and the Maritime Provinces. The people remained without the church during the night, watching the relics, which were under illuminated tents, and singing "Hæc est vera fraternitas." On all sides a song, and a jubilation of laymen and of women, never ceased throughout the whole night.||||

In one of the Capitularies which Dacherius brought to light after lying in dust for more than eight hundred years, we read as follows:—"It

\* In lib. ii. Car. 101.

† Joan. Devot. Instit. Canon. lib. ii. tit. iv. 1.

§ Italia Sacra, v. 664.

\*\* Epist. lvii.

†† Urban V. 1264, Martin V. 1429.

† Serm. iv.

|| Can. 27.

†† Sixt. V. Bref. 1586.

|||| Italia Sacra, i. 675.



is to be intimated, that the appropriate responses should be said to the sacerdotal salutations; for not only clerks and priests, dedicated to God, should offer the response, but all the devout people ought to answer with consonant voice.”\* By several councils in the time of Charlemagne it was decreed that a “laic in the church should repeat the psalms and responses, but not the alleluiah.”† The people, as we see in Catholic countries at present, knew the psalms by heart. “Facile psalmi memoria retinentur,” says Nicetius, “si frequenter psallantur. In psalmis Christi sacramenta cantantur.”‡ An affecting instance of this knowledge is presented in the history of Spain. When the Catholic army under Ferdinand and Isabella entered Moclin in solemn state, with the standard of the cross borne in the advance, they were accompanied by a band of priests and friars, with the choir of the royal chapel, chaunting the hymn “Te Deum Laudamus.” As they were moving through the streets in this solemn manner, every sound hushed excepting the anthem of the choir, they suddenly heard, issuing as it were from under ground, a chorus of voices, chaunting the words “Benedictum qui venit in nomine Domini.” The procession paused in wonder. The voices were those of Christian captives, who were confined in subterraneous dungeons. The heart of Isabella was greatly touched; she ordered the captives to be drawn forth from their cells; and then these poor creatures came forth, wasted by hunger, half naked, and in chains. Many of them were brave knights who had been wounded and made prisoners in the defeat of the Count of Cabra.

It must be acknowledged that this familiarity of the people with the ecclesiastical offices, is a fact in the history of the middle ages of which many modern readers may not have been prepared to hear: for undoubtedly, in latter times, after so long a period has elapsed since the removal of the blessed source of light and warmth, when the public mind and manners have been so estranged from the supernatural tone of faith, when the only thirst recognised is for delusive streams, when the only provision made is for mere material interests,—men lose all personal acquaintance with the sublime and beautiful liturgy of the church; and in compliance with their weakness, the solemn proses, the venerable hymns, are either omitted altogether, or else passed over in haste, as something frivolous or obsolete, in which there is no interest taken. There remain but a few men, lovers of antiquity, in whose minds the idea of the divine office is mingled with a certain Virgilian sadness, as if it were a thing that had been; and who cannot but feel in some degree the affliction of the prophet when he cried, “How is the gold obscured, the best colour changed!” “Dispersi sunt lapides sanctuarii in capite omnium platearum.” But some estimate may be formed of what existed in ages of faith, from what we find in countries wholly Catholic at present, where is still fulfilled the prayer of the church in the benediction of the paschal candle—that in which she desires that her courts may resound with the great voice of the people. Mabillon speaks of many secular men, kings

\* *Capitulare Ahytonis Episcop. Basiliensis iii. Spicileg. tom. vi.*

† *Concil. Mogunt. c. 9, Capitul. 49, l. 5. Capitul. 136. Heraldus Turon. 10. c. 105, p. 7. Burchard, c. 87, l. 8.*

‡ *Nicetius Episcop. de Psalmody Bono, apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. iii.*

and nobles, who used, like Alfred and St. Louis, to recite the breviary every day.\* The young and old, the poor and rich, persons of both sexes and of all conditions, used to know these compositions by heart, and would love to return to them with the course of the ecclesiastical year, and to sing them with the utmost fervour, uttering so ready and so cordial an "Amen," as plainly spoke a personal and profound conviction of their justice. In fact, for many natures, the soul being imbued with the melody of the different Catholic hymns, psalms, and proses, was thought to be an essential part of education, and almost as important as a knowledge of the catechism; for, as the ancients held that it was necessary to be a musician to understand the *Timæus* of Plato, so it seemed that, without a knowledge of music, the philosophy of the Catholic Church could not be understood. The truth is, that with our fathers, domestic or patriarchal had not superseded Catholic and Christian manners; the dividing and appropriating spirit had not destroyed that of diffusion; men had not become so formed to habits of savage ferine seclusion as to make their hearths their altar; the entertainments, the conversations of their domestic circle, were not dearer to them than the public offices of religion; the festival had not yielded to the banquet, nor the benediction to the amusements of evening society. The churches being the assemblies most generally and dearly loved, careful and curious provision was made for the edification of the laity, by maintaining the solemn office unmaimed, and by celebrating them as the church prescribed. In those grave times, when men deeply felt the utter incompatibility of reverence with levity, offices, however rapidly recited, were not mutilated or passed over in an inarticulate and confused manner. For no man, vested in sacred or any public dignity, could then have been accused of forming an exception to the general character of the human race, as we find it designated by Homer, when he speaks of *μερόπων ἀνδρῶπων*. The words read by the priest for all were, as Mabillon observes, to be pronounced aloud, that those who assisted could hear them.† In places the farthest removed from centres of faith and fervour, the offices were still celebrated according to the universal custom of the church—for it was the desire of the holy and fervent, not that of the scornful and indifferent, which was consulted during the middle ages; on account of which judgment, let no one attach blame to former guides, since it was an evidence of their wisdom to reject the policy that would require things to be reduced to the lowest standard, in order to please the weakest. To prove this, we need only observe how the Creator himself deals with men; for the beauty and the magnificence of the natural world, which are also a sacred scripture, or a kind of holy office, are not proportioned to the capacities of children, but it is only as men approach to the highest cultivation of which their intelligence is susceptible, that they can fully appreciate them. By adhering uniformly to the Roman offices, the strong were supplied with the nourishment appropriate to the wants of their intelligence, without neglecting the interests of the weak: for besides that their particular wants could easily be supplied, it was well known that they are always attracted and pleased by meeting with what contains more than they can fully master,

---

\* Prefat. in vi. Sæcul. Bened. 6.

† De Studiis Monast.

in the same manner as children are ravished at the works and voice of nature. It is not merely the expert swimmer who loves to behold the ocean stream; children too are delighted when they look down upon its profound abyss, and listen to its foaming tide. So do the humble and illiterate contemplate with awe the mystic solemnities of the church, and in an ecstasy of the most sweet imprisonment, listen to her lofty song.

In conformity with these principles, the divine offices were not merely celebrated in cathedrals and monasteries, but also in all churches, from the sixth century. The canons of the Council of Lyons, in the year 475, commanded clerks who should be in villages to assist at matins. It was decreed in the year 787, in England, by a council, that every church should discharge its course of canonical hours with reverence; and King Edgar, in the tenth century, decreed that the bells should be tolled at the regular hours to give notice to the people. The same custom prevailed in France,—“so far,” adds Mabillon, “were the laity of those ages from considering it a proof of great religion to hear a mass on days of obligation.”\* In fact, so habituated were the laity to find consolation and assistance in the regular offices of the church, that when, to meet the exigencies of evil days, a new order arose, illustrious for the sanctity and learning of its members, but so instituted as to be obliged to abandon their public celebration for active combat, the fact of its having churches without choirs was adduced as a serious charge against it; and that, not by the religious of the ancient orders who adhered to them, but by secular magistrates and lawyers, speaking in the name of the lay society.† St. Cæsarius, of Arles, on account of the number of laymen who used to come to matins and to complin, used to recite homilies and passages from the sacred Scriptures and from the passions of the martyrs. From the ninth century we find, in the books of every age, that the acts of St. Stephen, which, according to the Roman ritual, were alone read at mass, are given in the vulgar tongue; for, after having been read in Latin, they used to be sung in the vulgar language to the people.‡ It is a favourite opinion with those who feel no regret for the abandonment of ancient discipline, that the devotional assiduity of men in the churches in the middle ages, was not combined with spiritual piety, or the habit of mental prayer. On referring, however, to the books of that time, we find this opinion has no other foundation but the abuse to which the best institutions are always liable. Constant allusion is made to the maxim of St. Augustin, “Non clamans sed amans cantat in aure Dei.” It was the edict of the blessed Benedict, “Sic stemus ad psallendum ut mens nostra concordet voci nostræ. Non in clamosa voce,” saith he, “sed in puritate cordis et compunctione lacrymarum nos exaudiri sciamus.”||—“Prayer is of the heart, not of the lips,” says Hugo of St. Victor;§ who, on the other hand, shows elsewhere that the psalmody and long offices of the choir are not on that account to be blamed, but to be animated with the fervour of internal love.\*\* The remembrance of having pronounced

\* Disquisit. de Cursu Gallicano. † Pasquier Recherches de la France, liv. iii. 44.

† Gerbert, de Cantu Sacra, i. 390.

|| In Regul. c. 20. 52.

§ De Anima, lib. iii. cap. 29. \*\* Annot. Elucid. Allegor. in Matthæum, lib. ii. 2.



one verse without a firm attention during the office of matins, upon which he was then meditating in the church, according to his custom, after singing it with the clergy, was sufficient to induce Raynaldus, Archbishop of Ravenna, to recommence it from the beginning; which devout exercise detained him till the break of day. This was in the beginning of the fourteenth century.\*

"In the ecclesiastic song, we do not regulate our judgment by the rules of the theatre," says Cardinal Bona, following St. Jerome; "so that if there be any child with an indifferent voice, yet if he has good works, he is a sweet singer before God." "Alas!" cries St. Augustin, "*quam multi sonant voce, et corde muti sunt! Cantat Deo, qui vivit Deo.*"

The celestial music consists in the contemplation of God, in exaltation of mind, and in immortality of body. "Neither sweet music," says the wise Ascetic, "nor hymns, nor holy books, nor beautiful treatises, nor the presence of good men, nor of devout brethren, can profit much when we are deserted by grace, and left to our own poverty." "The prayer of the mouth," says Louis of Blois, "is like the straw; and that of the heart is the grain. These two joined together are favourably heard by God."† Another spiritual writer, exhorting the novices, when assisting at the divine offices, to cherish the most fervent devotion, in imitation of the angelic hierarchy, adds, "For all acts, if viewed of themselves, separated from elevation of mind, are like dead bodies lying on the ground; but if that spirit of life, which the mind can receive from God, begins to blow, then instantly they rise, and declare the glory of God."‡ We read in the canons of Crodogang, that "the singers must be humble and devout men," "*quorum melodia animos populi circumstantis ad memoriam amoreinque cœlestium non solum sublimitate verborum, sed etiam suavitate sonorum, quæ dicantur erigat.*"||

The most express and minute rules were given to regulate the external behaviour in the churches. The canons of the Synod of Risbach, in the diocese of Ratispon, held in the year 799, commence with these words, "*In æde sacra ne strepunto; ne ambulanto; ante finem rei divinæ ne excedunto.*"§ The decrees of Crodogang descend to such particular details, as to direct their censure against those loathsome guttural feats, which the Easterns hold in horror, though at present in the most civilized nations of the West they are practised every where with effrontery. In this prohibition one discovers the gentle courtesy of the middle ages, for the words of the canon are, "*ut infirmis mentibus non vertatur in nauseam.*"\*\* Speaking unnecessarily in the Church subjected offenders to heavy ecclesiastical censures in the middle ages as well as in primitive times.†† "To external reverence in the Church," says Cardinal Bona, "belong the keeping a watch upon the senses, the composition of the outward man, the tone of voice, gravity of manner, decency of habit, and the observance of all ceremony and prescribed rite; that the knees be bent, that we stand, sit, rise again, and incline as the occasion

\* Italia Sacra, i. 383.

† Instit. Spirit. c. 8.

‡ P. Joan. a Jesu Maria Instruct. Novehorum, iii. 1.

|| Crodogangi Regula Canonic. cap. 50, apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. i.

§ Germania Sacra, tom. ii. 110.

\*\* Reg. Can. cap. 15, apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. i.

†† Concil. Gradens.

requires, that nothing may appear which can offend the beholders.”\* Cassian † and St. Benedict ‡ sanction the custom of sitting humbly and modestly in the Church, when the occasion permits. In the decrees collected by Ives de Chartres, we read that the clergy are to teach the people to kneel at mass during Lent; but that on Sundays and festivals no knee should be bent from eve to eve, but that all were to pray standing, according to ancient discipline attested by Tertullian, § and St. Irenæus, § and enforced by the Council of Nice,\*\* which had never been interrupted in monasteries: Paul, the deacon, speaking of the monks of Monte Casino, expressly mentions that they never bent the knee at the public office on Sundays, nor on any day between Easter and Pentecost. †† The custom of resting one knee only on the earth is denounced in this collection, as having an indecorous resemblance with the act of the Jews who mocked our Lord. ‡‡ In the tenth century, during the canon of the mass, men lay prostrate on the earth; but towards the period of the great outbreak of heresy in the fifteenth century, the piety of men became so cold, that one bishop published ten days of indulgence to those, who should remain at mass until the end, and his successor continued it to all truly penitent and confessed, provided they remained on their knees from the elevation of the holy Eucharist to the elevation of the chalice: so languid was the piety of that time. ||| No one instructed in the philosophy of the ages of faith, was disposed to consider such injunctions as frivolous. “Harmony in the body,” says Plato, “appears always to be adjusted for the sake of sympathy in the soul.” §§ “They who pray,” says St. Augustine, “fashion their limbs in accordance with the act of supplication when they bend their knees, or extend their hands, or prostrate themselves on the ground, although their invisible will and intention of heart be known to God, and he does not want these signs that the human mind may be revealed to him, yet by them, man excites himself more to pray and groan humbly and fervently, and I know not how, while these movements of the body must have been preceded by a movement of the mind, nevertheless by means of the external and visible act, the internal and invisible is increased, and thus what preceded is augmented by what follows.” ¶ It was but natural that before the invention of printing, the use of books by the people in the churches should not have been general. In the fifteenth century, a prayer-book for the use of the people in England, entitled the Festival, resembling those at present in use, was printed by Wynkyn de Worde. The Psalter, the Gospels, the Acts, as also all the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, for the whole year, were translated into English, by Richard, a religious hermit, in the reign of King Henry II. The archives of the churches of St. Severin, at Bordeaux, of Senlis, Laon, and Rheims, make mention of missals which were enclosed in an iron cage attached to a pillar in the nave, so that the hand could enter through the bars to turn over the pages. Many of the laity who repeated the office, knew most of it by

\* De Div. Psal. 491.

† Lib. ii, c. 12.

‡ Cap. 9.

|| De Orat. c. 23.

§ Fragm.

\*\* C. 20.

†† Chronic. S. Monast. Casinens. Epist. ad Carolum Regem.

‡‡ Ivo de Carnot. Decret. pars iv. c. 36.

||| Mabillon, Præfat. in v. Sæcul. Bened. § 6.

§§ De Repub. lib. x.

¶ De Cura pro Mortuis.

heart; others had manuscript leaves to assist their memory. When the emperor of Germany took leave of King Charles V. of France, at Paris, Christine de Pisan says, that he begged that he would give him one of his books of hours, saying that he would pray to God for him. The king presented him with two, one little, the other great.\* The prayer-book of Charles-le-Chauve, which with his Bible, is in the king's library, at Paris, is bound richly, covered with precious stones, and in bas-reliefs in ivory of the most curious workmanship. In the chapel of the Castle of St. Ouen, belonging to the knights of the Order of the Star, founded by King John, there was a book for their use in French prose, which is noticed in the catalogue of the library of Charles V.† In the library of Plasantia, may be seen the Psalter of the Empress Engelberge, wife of Louis II. written with her own hand in the year 847. How early the use of devotional manuscripts prevailed in secular life, may be found attested even on the ancient sepulchres, as on that affecting tomb which faces the monument of Dagobert, in the Abbey of St. Denis, where a young princess is represented in the attitude of death, with her poor little book of hours pressed against her bosom. The rosary, however, was the most ordinary devotion of the people in a devout and meditative age, when men had leisure for contemplation. This was not instituted by the Venerable Bede, as the English word beads has led some to suppose, for in the English councils the Latin word *beltedus* is used, which Ducange derives from the Saxon word, *belt*. There is something which remarkably evinces the spirit of the middle ages in the advice, which we find given to assist men at their devotion and to nourish the fervour of their piety. The Church herself prays that what we cannot celebrate with worthy minds, we may, at least, attend with humble service.‡ “When cold in prayer,” says one writer, “consider how many servants of God are then at their prayers, shedding tears of devotion, in forest cells and monasteries, and in the basilica of the martyrs, and do you now in spirit join yourself to them.”|| To this refers also what St. Ignatius calls the prelude of composition of place, as when men were told to imagine themselves actually present at the different scenes recorded in the Gospel. In the history of Leopold, Archduke of Austria, son of the Emperor Ferdinand II. there is given an account of his private papers, in which he drew up certain rules for his devotions. In the manner of assisting at mass, he says, “At the Gospel, I will listen to the words as if they proceeded from the mouth of Jesus Christ and were addressed to me alone.” Thee too, Leopold of Tuscany, among the worthies of antique days, let this humble page commemorate, whom in the church of the Annunciata, at Florence, I beheld on the festival of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin: for when at solemn mass the book of the Gospels was brought to thee after the deacon had read therefrom, lowly sinking on thy bended knees, thou didst kiss it devoutly, and then with palms inverted hide thy face, at which moment I remarked some cheeks down which stole a tear. That going up to the offering at mass, was a solemn and impressive thing which the people in many places have been unwilling to abandon. St. Emanuel, Bishop of

\* *Livre de Faiz*, &c. lib. iii. c. 45. † Lebeuf, *Hist. du Diocèse de Paris*, tom. iii.

‡ *Prayer of S. S. Perpetua and Felicitas*.

|| *Thom. a Kemp. Epist.*



Cremona, in the year 1170, celebrating mass, and refusing to receive the oblations of those who came up to the offering wearing long hair like women, the men who were rejected, retired to the door, and cut off their hair with their knives or swords, rather than suffer such a privation for its sake.\* Similarly it was the basilica of St. Peter, at Spoleto, which was made to attest the solemn act of the citizens, who on giving themselves to the pontiff, cut off their hair and beards, being the first of the Longobards to renounce that ancient distinction of their race.†

The distribution of blessed bread among all who assisted at high mass, which each house in the parish used to offer in turn, was another ancient rite, originating in the eulogia, which was the surplus of bread offered by the faithful for the altar, that was blessed by the priest, and distributed to all who did not communicate, and to children.‡ The names of the offerers were inserted in diptychs and recited from the altar.|| Thus Dagobert is related to have given many things to the churches, in order that on Sundays and festivals his name might be inscribed in the book of life.§ We find the names of Otho the Great, and of his wife Adelheid, of Bruno, Archbishop of Cologne, and of Otho's brother William, Archbishop of Mayence, of the sons of Otho, and of forty-four other persons, nobles and religious in the ancient diptych of the monastery of St. Maximin at Treves. In Italy where the young are so exquisitely formed and endowed with such a refined and spiritual look, having lines so beautifully pencilled that their countenances resemble those of angels in the paintings of Guido the Bolognese, one must be often struck with the tender piety evinced by poor children in the churches: and methinks it explains somewhat of the middle ages to behold these innocents, with garments so rough, and figures so soft and delicate, praying by themselves with the utmost fervour and recollection. It appears that great care was employed in excluding from the Churches whatever might distract the minds of the people; for which purpose there was a multitude of minor clerks employed who had not strictly orders. In early days, the danger of interruption from the pagans, made the porters of great consequence. When Pope St. Cornelius was elected in 254, the Roman Church had forty-four priests and one hundred and eight ministers. The proportion of the latter increased since the time of Constantine, and for five hundred years the churches were magnificently served. By many decrees, as that of the Council of Salzburg, in the year 1386, the penalty of suspension was to be incurred by such of the clergy as failed in paying due attention to the condition of the vestments, ornaments, and sacred vessels of the altar.\*\* To preserve the Cathedral of Pientina in its original beauty, Pius II. its founder, published a decree in the year 1362, pronouncing the severest censures on any one who should violate the whiteness of the walls and columns.†† Fleury and Chardon remark, that the saints of the early ages, in attending with such care to external things, were not occupied about trifles. They understood the importance of preserving the beauty of the place, the silence, decorum, order of the discipline, and the majesty of the

\* Italia Sacra, tom. iv. 605.

† Ib. i.

‡ Thomassinus de Vet. et. Nov. Ecclesiæ Disciplin. pars iii. lib. i. 14.

|| Saga de Diptychis Veterum, cap. 4.

§ Duchesne, tom. i. Scripta Franc.

\*\* German. Sacra, tom. ii. 462.

†† Italia Sacra, i. 1179.

ceremonies. Services of this nature were not then delegated to vulgar hirelings of ferocious manners, but to spiritual persons in whom meekness sweetened duty. Women were never to approach the altar to discharge any ministry.\* By the Council of Châlons in 650, as by many others, no one wearing arms was to presume to enter the church. "We who are always surrounded with the arms of legitimate empire," says Theodosius the younger, "and who should be constantly attended by an armed company, nevertheless when about to enter the temple of God, leave our weapons outside." The Council of Slengastad, however, admitted of one exception in favour of the king. At the time when the Normans were in military possession of the country, Count Rodulf, one of their chieftains, came to the Abbey of Monte Casino with the intention of taking the abbot prisoner, yet on entering the church he left his arms as usual, says the chronicle, outside, of which the servants of the abbey proceeded to take an advantage that could only be excused by the danger of their position.† In like manner when Desiderius, a young prince of Beneventum, came there with his company, we read that the servants were left outside the door, ostensibly for the sake of guarding the swords and horses, though in reality it was to provide for the escape of the prince, through a postern in the church, in order to accomplish his desire of embracing the monastic habit.‡ When in the year 1406, at Paris, some serjeants had seized during the divine office in the Church of St. Jacques de la Boucherie, a criminal who had retired there, the divine service instantly ceased, and interdicts were fulminated which were not loosened until the sentence of reparation had been passed. In the book before the last, we had occasion to revert to the law and custom of asylums, for in the middle ages, we read of men taking sanctuary where now they take vengeance. Who is not moved at hearing that in times of the greatest disorder and misery, there was always one city of refuge, which never beheld the horrid images of war, where no gentle loving spirit was constrained to recoil in terror:—

ταρβήσας χαλκόν τ', ἰδὲ λόφον ἱππιοχαίτην  
 δεινὸν ἅπ' ἀκροτάτης κόρυδος νένοντα νοήσας,||

where no one, however daring, was ever seen even to enter *πεκορυσμένος αἰδοπι χαλκῷ*; for the act of Philippe-le-Bel, who entered the Church of Nôtre Dame on horseback, on returning to Paris after his victory in Flanders, was like a sinister omen of future impiety, and only in character with the tyrant, who had pushed his sails into the temple and spared not even Christ's vicar in his wrath. The reverence due to the sacred mysteries was accurately stated and strictly maintained. It was reserved for the faithful of later times to behold in their sanctuaries the boasting of those who hate God in the midst of his solemnity—"Et gloriati sunt qui oderunt te in medio solemnitatis tuæ."§ "Consider, my beloved," says St. Ephrem of Edessa, "with what fear those stand before the throne, who wait on a mortal king. How much more does it behoove us to appear before the heavenly King with fear and trembling, and with awful gravity."\*\* "Here were," as St. Chrysostom says, "great-

\* Ivonis Carnot. Decret. pars ii. c. 135.

† Chronic. S. Monast. Casinensis, lib. ii. c. 71.

|| Il. vi. 469.

§ Ps. xiii.

‡ Id. lib. iii. c. 2.

\*\* Paræn. xix.

er symbols than the holy of holies contained, for here was not the cherubim—here were not the urn and the manna, and the tables of stone, and the rod of Aaron, but the body and blood of our Lord.”\* “Truly tremendous,” he cries, “are the mysteries of the church—truly tremendous are our altars.”† The custom of standing during the divine offices is indicated in the name given to the wooden recesses in the choir of collegiate churches, though at the lessons all were permitted to be seated, after the example of Christ among the doctors; and holy men speaking of this practice, remark the saying of Aristotle, that by sitting and resting, the mind becomes wise.‡ A very ancient inscription which was formerly on the steps of the pontifical chair in the Church of the Vatican, proves that it was the custom at Rome, in remote times, as it still continues to be in many countries, for the men to be placed on one side of the church and the women on the other.§ Every emergency is provided for by canonists respecting the celebrating of the Christian mysteries. If a priest in saying mass should drop dead or be taken ill, so as to be unable to proceed, and if this should happen before the consecration, the mass was not to be continued by another priest; but if it be after the consecration, the mass was to be finished by another priest, though he should not be fasting, in order that the mysteries might not be left imperfect; for the ecclesiastical precept which enjoins the fast was to give way to the necessity of completing the sacrifice. As the canon says, “Since we are all one in Christ, the diversity of persons forms no contrariety.” If the church should be violated or polluted, before the canon, the mass was to be interrupted, if after it, to be completed. If the advance of an enemy, or the breaking in of a flood, or any ruin should occasion imminent danger, before the canon, the mass was to be suspended, if after the consecration, the priest was hastily to receive the body and blood. If an enemy of the Christian religion should threaten the priest with death, unless he brake off the mass, the canonists said, that the priest was bound to continue, though at the risk of his life, whether it be before or after the consecration. Pope Gregory VII. being wounded on the head by an assassin, who favoured King Henry, as he said mass on the night of Christmas, did not descend from the altar until he had finished the mass which he had begun. But there were some occasions when it was held necessary to break off the mass, even after the consecration, as when a dying child was to be baptized, or any one was to be confessed and administered, being at the point of death, who otherwise might have died without the sacraments.¶

On the festival of St. Michael, as the Christians were assembled in the Island of More, and St. Francis Xavier was at the altar saying mass, a violent earthquake came on in the middle of the sacrifice. The people in the utmost terror fled out of the church, but the saint remained at the altar and finished the sacred mysteries. The barbarians were lost in astonishment on beholding a man who remained immovable, while the rocks and the mountains trembled, and they judged him to be divine.\*\* The Archduke Leopold, of Austria, son of the Emperor Fer-

\* In Ps. cxxxiii.

† Hom. 46.

‡ Physic. 7.

§ Pauli Aringhi Roma Subterranea, p. 117.

¶ Bened. XIV. de Sacrif. Missæ, sect. 2. 105—118.

\*\* Bouhours i. 203.



dinand II. being at his devotions in a church at Salsfeld, and the artillery of the enemy beginning to rage, and the balls to fly on all sides, he was warned of his danger, but he replied, "that no one could injure him while he was so near his God." In the Franciscan convent, at Clonmel, in the midst of the choir was the stately monument of Edmund Butler, Baron of Cahir, all of marble, with very curious figures and bas relievos. That baron being at high mass in the monastery, news was brought him that the Earls of Ormond and the Barons of Dunboine, his relations, were then ravaging his lands. He was no way discomposed, but staid till the mass was finished, and then marching against the invaders, defeated them.\* Louis XII. on entering a church to hear mass, received a letter, which was known to contain news of great importance respecting the success of his arms. Nevertheless he would not open it until the sacrifice was finished. In these ages, men otherwise steeled against conscience were found impressed with such a reverence for the churches, that they shrunk from the thought of making them the scene of their crimes. When Verinna, one of the conspirators in league with Fiesquo, proposed to assassinate Andrew and Jannetin Doria, and Adam Centurione, while they were assisting at mass, the count instantly rejected the plan with horror, declaring that he would never consent, for the sake of any advantage, to commit such an outrage to the most holy mystery of religion. This fact is mentioned by the Cardinal de Retz. Who has not heard the surprising history, relating how the Christian churches were respected even by the barbarous invaders of Rome, to which St. Augustin, with such eloquence alludes, in comparing them with the heathen temples, saying, *Ibi amissa, hic servata libertas: ibi clausa, hic interdicta captivitas*. The basilicas of Christ inspired ferocious barbarians with humility and pity, who then gave a new spectacle to the world?†

Having now taken a general view of the sacred offices in relation to history, in order to complete what we have begun, let us conceive ourselves present, and penetrating as it were into the crowd, let us cast a contemplative look upon the wondrous and the tender scene. Lo, what an assembly is here. This is the blessed vision of peace. It is here that the race of men seems amiable. It is here that we feel how near they are to God who thus showers down his mercy upon them in the midst of his temple. Yes, sweet is the air of temples to those who have endured the thirst of the Babylonian exile, to those who have wandered sufficiently long in the land of malediction, as to discover how tasteless are its fruits, and how void of perfume its most gorgeous flowers. At the first step on entering this garden of God, it is as if one emerged from a withering atmosphere, to feel the healthful and delicious breeze of mountains. What a glow of charity suddenly transports the heart and revives the fancy, though joy and hope had before seemed dead. No distrustful, or malignant, or inquisitive looks cause you to feel yourself a stranger, for it seems to be here as it is in Paradise, where the blessed hail each new arrival, crying,—

—— "Lo one arrived  
To multiply our loves."†

\* Monast. Hiber. 277.

† De Civitate Dei, lib. i. c. 4. 6.

‡ Dante, Par. v.

Unnumbered are the wretched men possessing lofty souls tortured by the feeling of isolation, and afflicted with unutterable anguish at the thought of remaining for ever unknown. They thirst after society—after communion with congenial intelligences. What society then can be found so amiable, so inspiring, so full of all consolation, and of all remedies for human misery, as that of the faithful in the house of God? They wish to be entreated, and that their presence may be sought for, but what more noble invitations or more worthy of all acceptance can they receive than those which are made to all the faithful in a Catholic city, when they are entreated to come, rich men and beggars, in such composed and seemingly fellowship, as would become the fair equality of the golden world, to honour the memory of some friend of God in the church which has invoked him? The feasts of secular luxury last but for a short season. In the divine temples there is an eternal festivity, for nothing there is celebrated that passes away, or that hath a shadow of change. Eternal is the festival in which, as St. Gregory says, we escape from our own mutability by beholding him who is immutable—“*Mutabilitatem nostram transcendemus videndo immutabilem.*” \* “From that festivity,” says a great author, “there is heard I know not what certain sweet song in the ears of the heart, provided the world doth not disturb it. This unearthly sound soothes the ear of him who walks in the courts of God, who considers the wonders of God in the redemption of the faithful; and it leadeth the stag to the fountains of waters. Nevertheless since as long as we are in the body we are journeying at a distance from the Lord, and that the corruptible body weighs down the mind, and terrene cares oppress it, if by desires sometimes we come to that sound, yet after a while by the weight of our infirmity we fall back to our accustomed sorrows. But there we shall always find that in which we can rejoice, although here there is never wanting that which causes us to mourn. And now transporting ourselves to the neighbourhood of some church in the middle ages, behold what a multitude resorts thither. The bell sounding within the lofty tower like the Divine voice, calls many. Soon you see the humble crowd winding its way along the pious path. It is the poor orphan who spins as she walks; it is the blind man who feels his way with his stick; it is the timid beggar whose hand holds a rosary; it is the child who caresses each flower as he passes by; it is the old man who hastens with feeble steps;—youth and age are the friends of God.” †

But ere we proceed further, let us listen to the solemn murmur of those bells which invite the faithful:—for though in a former Book, we had occasion to speak of them, still one cannot refuse to return, and stand awhile, musing at their sound!

In the life of St. Loup, Bishop of Sens, we read, that when King Clothaire heard the bell of St. Stephen, he was so delighted with its tone, that he ordered it to be removed to Paris, where he might always hear it: and the bells of St. Saviour at Blois sent forth such harmony, that when every thing else seemed to fail, they were found to soothe that profound melancholy to which Henry III. was subject. ‡ In the

\* Hom. ii. lib. i. super Ezech.

† De la Martine *Harmonies Poétiques*, ii. 192.

‡ Bernier, *Hist. de Blois*, 35.

chronicles of Italy we have another example of attention to the music of bells. The Countess Matilda Eurilla, while remaining at Ferrara, went to take the diversion of hunting, with spears and nets, in the woods near the Benedictine Abbey of St. Bartholomew. Imperceptibly the time passed, till the meridian hour found her exhausted with hunger and fatigue. The monks then came out, and with all benignity invited her to take refreshment, which she did not refuse. No sooner had she set down to table than the bell from the tower emitted a dead and abrupt sound, upon which she asked how it came to be split, and why it had not been cast afresh, in order that it might give a clearer sound. The monks beginning to speak of the poverty of their house, she immediately took off her jewels and her gold spurs, which she presented to the abbot. The bells were afterwards called by the Italians the spur-bells, and a spur was engraven on the brass, with verses commemorating her pious liberality.\* The office of the bell used to be described in these lines :

“ Laudo Deum verum, plebem voco, congrego clerum,  
Defunctos ploro, pestem fugo, festa decoro.”

Inscribed on the bell were generally various solemn lines. Thus on one bell of the Cathedral of Strasbourg, you read—

“ Nuncio festa, metum, nova quædam, flebile lethum;”

on another—“ O Rex gloriæ Christe, veni cum pace;” on another—

“ Vox ego sum vitæ, voco vos; orate, venite.”

Each tone had often a distinct object to indicate. Thus there was the great and solemn bell exclusively for the high festivals of the Church. Of less magnitude was the bell of the Angelus; the bell to announce the opening and termination of the fair; the bell for the retreat; the bell to announce the divine offices on ordinary occasions. That certain bells of the towers were sounded at the elevation, as well as other parts of the divine office, in order that the people without the church might be excited to prayer, can be collected from a letter of Ives of Chartres, to Matilda, Queen of England, thanking her for the present of bells to that church.† Never can I lose the memory of what I experienced under the dome of Florence, when one heard as if on all sides the indistinct moaning of that solemn bell. Dugdale relates that Athelwold, abbot of Abingdon, in the tenth century, made a wheel which was filled with bells, which being sounded on the greater festivals, used to excite the devotion of the people. In many churches, as at Strasbourg, there was a different musical air executed by the bells three or four times each day, besides a peculiar harmony of joy for each of the festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. Celebrated were the bells of Freyburg in Brigau; of St. Stephen at Vienna, which tower was erected by Conrad Zaringen in the twelfth century, of Salzburg, Erfort, Hamburg, Holm, Rouen, Lyons, Tours, Paris, and many other places. It required the force of sixteen men to sound the great bell of Strasbourg, which measured twenty-two feet in circumference. In Italy there were bells weighing twenty-two thousand pounds.

But we are at the portal; the space before which is entitled the Paradise, either from its intrinsic beauty or from its proximity to the courts

\* Italia Sacra, i. 530.

† Epist. cxlii.



of heaven,\* or from the bodies of the faithful reposing there, as before the church of Amalphi.† The whole ground too, as before the cathedral of Cefalu in Sicily, by the piety of Count Roger,‡ and in front of the noble church of Salerno, built by Robert Guiscard, was often deeply covered with holy earth, which had been brought from Jerusalem: and in many places, as at Nola, the whole basilica was surrounded with sepulchres, urns and inscriptions, redolent of venerable antiquity. At the gate of the latter you read these lines—

“ Siste gradum, quamvis properes, en siste, viator;  
Te cogat pietas, religioque loci.  
Quemque Augustinus, Paulinus, Bedaque libris  
Concelebrant, flexo tu venerare genu.  
Ingredere, at mundo corde, et simul excute plantas,  
Sanctorum quando corpora mille premas.”

The inscription at the entrance of the cathedral of Bari in Apulia, admonished the stranger to imitate the humility of the holy men, Hælias and Eustachius, who had built and adorned that church, concluding thus:—

“ His gradibus tumidis ascensus ad alta negatur,  
His gradibus blandis quærere celsa datur.  
Ergo ne tumeas, qui sursum scandere quæris,  
Sis humilis, supplex, planus, et altus eris.”

See these smiling children on the steps, these playful innocents, who serve in the temple. See too these devout widows, these humble men, who hasten to ascend! Ah! here must be the entrance to joy; here we shall have renewed the peaceful beauteous dreams of youth, here we shall be reminded of the thoughts of our golden years. For we may remark that the Church, unlike all that belongs to the world, is never rendered by age different from what it was found to be at first. It is like a treasury, in which all the past joys of men are preserved. The innocence and delights of youth, the intellectual riches of maturity, are laid up in store here, safe and uninjured. No one as he grows old, becomes weary of it, but on the contrary, the human heart loves and venerates it, if possible, each day, more and more; for while it restores to the mind of man all the bloom and fragrance of his first years, all that gave joy to his youth, it presents to it in prospect the fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore. At the divine altar, the Catholic beholds and possesses whatever has rejoiced his soul in life: he sees the star by which he has steered through all the gusts and tides of the world's mutability. But let us enter, passing with timid steps over the threshold; for underneath it often lies buried some humble pontiff, like Bartholomew Castelli, who caused his body to be placed before the greater door of his cathedral of Mazara, in order, as an inscription testified, that it might be trod upon by the feet of all,§ an instance similar to which we find at the church of St. James of the Spaniards, in Rome, where, through the same humble choice and desire of mercy, the body of Bartholomew de la Guera, Duke of Albuquerque, and Archbishop of Siponto, lies buried under the threshold.\*\* Lo, what a crowd fills the holy place! This is the house of the Lord, founded on the tops of the mountains, and exalted above all hills; and all nations come to it, and say, “Glory be to thee, O Lord.”

We have many records attesting the fulfilment of these words from

\* In Chronic. S. Monast. Casinens. lib. ii. c. 9, notæ.

† Italia Sacra, vii. 226.

‡ Sicilia Sacra, ii. 813. § Italia Sacra, vii. 612. § Sicilia Sacra, ii. \*\* Id. vii. 860.

the history of the ages of faith. Apollinaris Sidonius describes the solemn vigil on the feast of St. Justus. "The procession was before light; a vast multitude was there of both sexes, which that capacious basilica could not contain." St. Hugo VI. abbot of Cluny, was obliged to enlarge the church of the monastery, as it was not able to contain the crowds that resorted to it.\* Great was the multitude which the festivals of the martyrs, in the first ages, drew from all parts, to the churches which contained their relics, when, as Theodoret says, our Lord had brought his dead into the room and place of the heathen gods, and instead of the feasts of Jupiter and Bacchus, were celebrated the festivals of Peter and Paul. St. Paulinus enumerates more than twenty cities and provinces of Italy, of which the inhabitants came every year with their wives and children, in the depth of winter, to honour the memory of one confessor, St. Felix, in the city of Nola. We may judge what was the concourse at Rome on the festivals of St. Hyppolytus, St. Laurence, and the Apostles: or at Tours, on that of St. Martin. "At Nola," says St. Paulinus, "it is delightful to behold one city enclosing many cities, and such multitudes united by one vow. Thither came the people of Lucania and the Apulian youth, the Calabrians too, and they from joyful Campania, whom rich Capua and beauteous Naples encircle with ample walls,—they who cultivate the happy lands of Gales, whom powerful Atisia and mother Aricia send. Rome even rejoices to see her sacred precincts deserted for the honour of God, while far and wide the issuing multitude pursues the Appian way. Nor are the rough tops of the Latin mountains less thronged, as they whom lofty Præneste, whom festive Aquinum nourish, and whom ancient Ardea sends from its borders, repair to the festival. Thither hasten crowds also from olive-bearing Venafrò; and the hard Samnites leave the mountain towers—

Vicit iter durum pietas, amor omnia Christi  
Vincit, et alma fides, animisque locisque rigentes  
Suadit acerba pati, simul aspera ponere corda.  
Una dies cunctos vocat, una et Nola receptat,  
Votaque plena suis spatiosaque limina cunctis,  
Credas innumeris ut mœnia dilatavit  
Hospitibus, sic Nola assurgit imagine Romæ."†

St. Gregory of Tours relates, that on the festival of the blessed martyr of the church of Brest, a clerk of the abbey of Limoges, coming to the festivity, such was the multitude of people, that he could not approach to the holy tomb, nor even enter within the church.‡ In the year 1500, one of the articles of the Jubilee at Rouen, requiring assistance at a solemn mass in its cathedral, that immense church could not contain the multitude, so that crowds in deep devotion knelt outside, and filled the adjoining streets.|| St. Odo says that the church of St. Martin at Tours, though of immense size, was too small for the crowds that sought to enter, inasmuch that the rails of the choir and the gate posts used to give way before them; and he adds, "Quam devotam violentiam credo, gratam habet dominus ipse Martinus, ad exemplum videlicet Domini sui quem turbæ comprimebant."§

This judgment of the middle ages, according to which an importunate crowd was a sublime spectacle, as being a practical evidence, as well

\* Bib. Clun. 457. † Italia Sacra, tom. vi. 248.

‡ Greg. Turon. Mirac. lib. ii. 28.

|| Tailliepié, Recueil des Antiq. de Rouen, 230. § De Comb. Basil. Bib. Clun. 146

as a kind of repetition of the facts of the Christian history, has nothing to fear from a comparison with the general sentiment of the moderns on the same subject; at least where affectionate and philosophic minds are to determine the question. The haste of the shepherds and the air of the stable were not forgotten on these occasions in Catholic times; nor did any one disdain to find himself in contact with the devout multitude, which would assuredly, with the same importunity, have pressed upon Christ. Being at Loretto, on the festival of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin, I could not penetrate within the Santa Casa until late in the evening of the second day, when being remarked by one of the guards, I was with charitable violence pulled through the more fervent throng. Some men come here to inquire and speculate about the origin of ancient traditions, but to me, who could not remain insensible to the intention of this vast multitude, so visibly impressed with the same tender and devout affections, marvellously foolish seem such pains. It was enough for me to meditate on what I felt and saw.

“The air of paradise did fan the house, and angels officed all.”

Let us remark here what a charm must have been found in the variety of characters which composed this multitude. In modern times, after such a successive diminution of truths affecting both the spiritual and the material hierarchy of society, nothing can be more monotonous than an assembly of people. There are the rich, cuirassed in egotism, initiated in no other rites but those of Bacchus, bred up with the same feeling of disdain for every outward manifestation of piety and fervour: there are the poor, parked in from all observation or contact with the rich, thoroughly subdued and moulded into one form of servilely servile respect. But in ages of faith it was a very different picture. The boundless variety of graces was seen indicated in the members of the faithful fold. In fact, what do we still find in Catholic countries amidst the pious throng? We find the simple hermit come from his woods, the shepherd from the mountains, the young and thoughtful clerk, the solemn religious man, the labouring youth, with joy and triumph in their looks,—all persons dissimilar in habits, in disposition of mind, in the cultivation and direction of their intelligence, and yet who have one centre and bond of union, the Church; and one model, Jesus Christ. “Non intrabit in eam aliquod, nisi qui scripti sunt in libro vitæ agni.” These words seem accomplished here, for before this altar, all who are present may be supposed, from their exterior appearance, to be either saints who have preserved their white baptismal robe unsullied, according to the solemn admonitions of the church, their mother, or else penitents who have atoned, or who are atoning, for having stained its purity. At times, indeed, may be discovered some awful figure, who seems moved, and yet unable to call on Heaven for mercy—one like those we read about in legendary tales, from whose eye no tear can fall, and at whose heart there seems to lie an icy coldness, unrelieved, though five thousand voices join to raise the holy hymn, and hearts are thrilled, and eyes are filled by that full harmony. But remark well, no persons seem to have come here merely to be observed, or to comply with a mechanical habit. Thus there is a common office, but there are particular wants; and therefore, while the priest chaunts aloud at the altar, the internal desire of innumerable hearts are sent up to heaven. As



Pope Benedict XIV. remarks, the object of the secret prayers is beautifully expressed by the Church in the secret of the mass on the fifth Sunday after Pentecost. "*Ut quod singuli obtulerunt ad honorem nominis tui, cunctis proficiat ad salutem.*" How deeply interesting is it, in the assembly of a church in some vast metropolis, to detect the man of interior life, the devout contemplatist, the hermit, who on these occasions comes abroad to mix in the throng of men,—to see in the church the devout student, whom nothing but the office could tear from his books, the holy recluse, who may be looked for elsewhere in vain! there he kneels, with hands crossed upon his breast, and eyes raised to the altar, as the spirit of Nino appeared to Dante,—

———"Both palms joined and raised,  
Fixing its steadfast gaze toward the East,  
As telling God, I care for naught beside."\*

Where he comes from, no one knows; and when the office is at an end, he will be lost in the retiring crowd, and be seen no more!

What a solemn and moving spectacle is that of the devout female sex in the churches! Dante had in his mind's eye many a living image, familiar to those who visit them, when he drew that touching portrait in the vision of Paradise:

"Lo! where Anna sits, so well content to look  
On her lov'd daughter, that with moveless eye  
She chaunts the loud hosanna."†———

It is like a demonstration of the divinity which presides over all the Catholic offices, to mark the universality of that intense affection with which they are loved by women—those fairest and best of creatures, to whom God hath given intelligence on earth, who turn their steps, or at least their hearts, to the Catholic altar, whether in joy or sorrow, in sickness or in health, like the innocent child, who always runs thither for succour where he trusteth most.

If to behold the divine beauty of the human countenance be at all times sweet to minds contemplative, where can this pleasure be enjoyed so fully as in the church! There raptures of love mixed with sorrow, at the solemn moment of communion, give a sublime expression to the countenance. That of joy, as has been acutely remarked by Gerbet, is seldom sublime; for joy is so fugitive and false a thing, that it seems to communicate to the human face somewhat of the air of insanity: grief, on the contrary, almost always enobles the countenance. The instinct, however, of our primitive destiny, wounded by this contrast, seeks another dignity besides that of sorrow. The true condition of man is the reparation of his misery; and his form never appears clothed in its most beautiful terrestrial character, excepting when it takes the expression of this mystery of sorrow and grace, when it receives the imprint of a divine joy, penetrating to the abyss of our sufferings.

Let no one esteem it puerile, if, when treating on the devout assemblies of the faithful, I speak of the pleasure and consolation inspired by the sight of these holy countenances; for doubtless some assistance was rendered to virtue, by the mere fact of men being generally accustomed to behold them. It was no small advantage, that in the church one could always reckon upon meeting, from time to time, with persons who bore

\* Purg. viii.

† Id. xxxii.

the mystic sign that Ezekiel saw upon the foreheads, living monuments of infinite almighty grace and power divine. Moreover, in these vast basilicas, thronged with innumerable people, upon a festal day, amidst the splendour of the saints, each one might avoid all notice, feel himself solitary and unobserved by any eye save that of his guardian angel who watched over him. There, before the sacramental presence, the poor stranger—forgotten and forsaken, in a foreign land, alone in the crowd—beholds his one, ancient, and only constant friend, the friend of his childhood, the friend of his youth, his friend for eternity. There too you will sometimes remark the timid maiden, or some child that recalls the image of a divine prototype, who, stealing from observation, drops a small piece of money upon the plate after kissing the cross of Christ: for in the churches, even children enjoy the privilege of free and voluntary sacrifice. O how mysterious and solemn a thing is it thus to be alone in the saintly crowd! to pass as it were a disembodied spirit through such a host of ghostly combatants, thirsting after justice and the streams of a happier world! The land of malediction ends here. No more of its restrictions, of its conventional barriers, of its miscalled social forms. The ceremonies of the secular courts would be profanation in the church. No one marshals you; no one heeds you. There are pillars, behind which you may kneel and weep in secret; there are retired chapels, in which you may lie prostrate before the blessed sacrament. The poor walk here free and favoured, as in presence of nature: they can approach to the altars as near as kings, and can enjoy, equally with the pomp and glory of nobility, the splendour and loveliness of the house of God: for the Church, as St. Chrysostom saith, is the common house of all men, in which the priest offers peace in common to all immediately on their entering it; and if concord were perfectly preserved, he adds, we should have no other house but this. Being, however, far removed from the virtue of those who had but one heart and one soul, and being separated from each other by houses at least, when we meet here, it is requisite to have this intention: for, although in other things we may be poor and rich, yet at least when here assembled, it is necessary that all in common should receive the priests of God with charity, and not with the lips alone, but with the mind also, should answer when they give us the salutation of peace.\*

Wherever the dignity or order of the sacred assembly required separation, it was not even kings who enjoyed the privilege. Since the first overthrow of order in the Gallic land, the mayor of every little town desires to have his seat apart within the sanctuary, which, like the sacred ark, still from unbidden office awes mankind; but until that epoch, the discipline of the first ages prevailed as established by many councils;† and however displeased Milton may have been, we know that St. Ambrose would not permit even the emperor to remain in the choir after making his offering. In the morning, how bright and splendid is this beauteous temple! Every altar beholds the ineffable mystery accomplished. At night-fall, how solemn is the voice of the preacher, echoing along the dusky aisles, while the deep groan of the hours resounds, murmuring through the stillness of the upper vaults!—Remark too what a bright yet melancholy gleam, the last of the expiring day, plays upon

---

\* Hom. xxxiii. in 9 Matt.

† Concil. Laod. c. 19; Concil. Trull. c. 69.

the upper shafts of the lofty columns! How silent and how awful seem those distant regions above! At one time all is hushed, and you fear almost to breathe. You behold like Dante in the other world,

“A crowd of spirits silent and devout;”

speechless, like Œdipus in the Coloniæan forest, allowing nothing to escape from their heart but the thought of prayer—

ἄφῶγος, ἀλόγως τὸ πᾶς  
εὐφῆμον στόμα φροντίδος  
ἴεντες—

At another, a little way before you, there are perhaps some who sing the Miserere in responsive strains. Lo, how many saints stretch their closed hands in furtherance of their suit! On this side comes the bright procession of taper-bearing, white-veiled penitents. Now they make their solemn halt; and now the tears steal down your cheeks, at the thrilling sweetness of that voice which joins the inexpressive song. O Christ, how impressive, how blessed a moment is this! “Beati qui habitant in domo tua, in sæculum sæculi laudabunt te.” “The church,” says St. Germain, “is the house of prayer, and a terrestrial heaven in which God dwells.”

“O templum! O templum! O felicia limina cœli!

Solaque digna Deo cœlicolisque domus!

Hic dulces resonant melicis concentibus hymni,

Hic colimus casta religione Deum.

O vos felices, divinorumque capaces,

Vos quibus astrorum splendida regna patent,

Vos quibus arrisit cœlum, jussitque tueri,

Angelicos vultus, angelicosque choros.”

“But why,” continues Cardinal Bona, “do I propose the angels to excite reverence in those who enter the divine temples? The King of angels, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is himself corporeally present in the adorable sacrament of the altar. How terrible then is this place, and how worthy of all reverence!”

Would you hear the language of the middle ages in reference to these ineffable mysteries? Children of men, say they, you open the book of the divine Scriptures, and you read how Christ the Messiah walked in Judea—how he passed through the multitude—how they who sat by the way-side, cried out, “Jesus, son of God, have mercy on us”—how the people thronged round, heard, and adored—and you say, “How happy the eyes which saw him, and the ears which heard his divine words!” Deceive not yourselves; say rather, “Beati qui non viderunt, et firmiter crediderunt.” Approach—enter the churches, the world of spirits, and exercise that faith which has the promise of life eternal; for when the mystic train moves through the prostrate multitude of those who strike their breasts, while the hymn which rises is sweet as from blest voices uttering joy, you have more encouragement—what do we say? you have greater evidence—to force you to adore him, in sacramental presence, than those men possessed who saw the infant of Bethlehem and Jesus of Nazareth in the sorrows and humiliation and passion of his humanity. Fall down, then, and adore the Messiah, the celestial King, the King of glory; and according to your faith, he will have mercy on you. Are you tempted with unholy thoughts? you will be freed from them. Are you a child of sorrow, wounded by the stern strokes of a



calamitous life? you will be comforted. Are you discouraged at the difficulties of your position—do you hunger and thirst after justice? you will be strengthened and refreshed. Mark and obey the prophetic invitation—“*Omnes sitientes, venite ad aquas: et qui non habetis argentum properate, emite et comedite.*”<sup>\*</sup> Trust the experience of men, who long, like you, have trod the common ways of life, and who assure you that it will be so, that you will be filled with benediction, filled with joy; that from the martyrdom of a sanguinary world, you will come to this peace. Yes, it is so; we may well say it who have received the mercy of the Lord in the midst of his temple. “*Sicut audivimus, ita et vidimus in civitate Dei nostri, in monte sancto ejus. Alleluja.*”

“Whosoever desires to come happily after death to the joys of the celestial kingdom, ought,” says an ascetic writer of the middle ages, “while in health and life, frequently to visit the house of God, willingly to hear preaching, often to repair to confession, and seek to gain indulgences. Happy the people, and greatly laudable, who leaving vain exhibitions, hasten to the house of prayer, and to the announcement of the divine word. Beautiful spectacle! to behold the temple of God every where filled with the faithful, and the market places quiet, undisturbed by the business of the world.”<sup>†</sup> “No place on the earth,” says Louis of Blois, “is more grateful to Christians than the house of prayer, where the sacrifice of the mass is daily celebrated in presence of assisting angels—so that from the holy temple these men can scarcely be torn away; and if they behold them at a distance, and are prevented from entering them, they at least salute them with a devout heart, and religiously adore the Lord of eternal Majesty.”<sup>‡</sup>

In the mere remembrance of the divine mysteries, men found an assistance in the great combat of life. “Alas! if I could go into a church,” we hear one cry, “if I could be where our Lord is lifted up, and appears to the congregation in sacramental presence—then, in that blessed moment, I should die of rapture!” In this mystic Jerusalem the prophecy is already in a great measure fulfilled—God wipes away all tears from the eyes of men, and there is no more death, nor any more grief, nor lamentation, nor sorrow, for the former things have passed away; and he who sitteth upon the throne has accomplished his word, and hath made all things new. The heart-rending regrets of humanity in its humblest state, and the mighty woes of genius, which the vulgar cannot conceive, are alike here forgotten. “*Felix hora, quando Jesus vocat de lacrymis ad gaudium spiritus!*” Can any thing be more affecting than this language of the middle ages in expressing the abundance of their joy? Hugo de St. Victor speaks of the mystic sweetness of the ecclesiastical mysteries. || “O what grace hath our Lord granted to me!” cries a poor recluse, to one who was compassionating her condition: “I might be sick, and I am well; I might be living far away in Pagan lands, and I am born here a Christian, in the neighbourhood of beautiful churches and of holy priests; I might be blind and deaf, but I hear the toll of bells, hear the chaunts of the choir, and every morning the image of my Saviour on the cross seems to speak to my heart in words of love. I am dead, and I live only for grace, for the chaunts of the church, and for the holy mass. Ah, my dear friend! when I enter the house of the

\* Isa. lv. 1.

‡ Enchirid. Pavul. lib. i. in fin.

† Thom. à Kempis, Sermonum iii. pars 9.

|| Speculum de Myst. Ecclesiæ, Prolog.

Lord, and the cathedral high and majestic encompasses me with so much grace and magnificence, every doubt, every earthly disquietude vanishes immediately. The smoke of the incense, the voice of the priest, which rises from the altar when I prostrate myself, awakens in my heart an impassioned fervour. The burning tapers remind me by their secret flame, of the secret of the world and of creation, and a thrilling emotion spreads over my whole body when I think of the mysteries of which these are the signs. I meditate and I pray. The Creator and Saviour move me with interior and ineffable words, which are heard at the bottom of my soul. I feel within me a love above all love—a beatitude—a felicity—a celestial breath—and then the bell tolls, and the mystery is accomplished: then a shuddering runs through my veins and through the marrow of my bones, and I feel that I am a Christian; that the incarnate Saviour is near me, and that he looks upon me with love.”

Some will recognize here the master's hand, which is employed in moulding an ideal world: but there is nothing in this of fiction. Of the intensity of these feelings we have monuments still existing in the stupendous cathedrals of the middle ages. In the year 1276, on the festival of the Purification, when Bishop Conrad, after celebrating mass, had marked the spot on which the first stone was to be placed of the cathedral tower of Strasbourg, such was the earnestness of two of the labourers, contending who should be the first to put his hand to the holy work, that one of them in the struggle received a mortal wound from a shovel; and in consequence of this accident, it was not until nine days had elapsed, and the place had been again blessed, that the bishop would permit them to resume the work of laying the foundation. When Desiderius, the abbot of Monte Casino, was about to rebuild the church of that monastery, having conveyed marbles thither from Rome, so great was the fervour of the faithful, that the first column was borne from the base of the mountain to the summit upon the shoulders of the multitude.\* In the eleventh century, Bertha, the mother of St. Eberhard, Archbishop of Salzburg, carried stones on her shoulders walking bare-foot for the space of half a league, to serve in the construction of the church of St. Mary, which was then being built in her own village of Allerstorff.† We read of churches, as that of Burgo St. Sepulchro, being built by men who, like the two noble pilgrims, Ascanus and Ægidius, returning from the holy sepulchre, had been visited with heavenly dreams, as they slept on the margin of limpid fountains:‡ we read of saints, like Maur, who succeeded Zeno in Verona's chair, retiring to mountains and building churches at a fountain:§ and well might the presence of such sweet refreshment awaken the remembrance of those never failing waters which spring up unto eternal life. The churches of the middle ages are all standing memorials of the fervour with which men thirsted after justice, worshipping God day and night with sacred mysteries and holy song.

“Devout persons,” says St. Bonaventura, “experience sometimes such a charm of sensible pleasures in the assemblies of the faithful, that they seem as if embalmed in the agreeable perfume which surrounds them, and dissolved in the sweetness of celestial harmony. Perchance this is the grace of God to encourage the imperfect in their commence-

\* Chronic. S. Monast. Casinensis, lib. iii. c. 28.

† Italia Sacra, iii. 195.

‡ Germania Sacra, tom. ii. 245.

§ Id. v. 692.

ment of a holy life, or it is the fulness of spiritual perfection, which by reason of the union of the soul with the body is communicated to the senses; or perhaps even it is a favour bestowed upon the body, that as it has been partaker of sorrow, and mortification with the soul, it may now also participate in its joy, for as the body labours with the soul, and both have their sufferings, there may be justice in imparting even to the body some consolation in the present as well as in the future life."\* The Catholic discipline rested upon this conviction, expressed by Lombez, that "man must have pleasure. That if he find it not in the service of God, he will look for it in the false joys of the world; for he feels that he is made to possess happiness, and he endeavours to attain his destiny." If he had found barred against him the portals of the house of God, he would have sought admittance to the assemblies of vain pleasure, though shame and ruin were sure to be his end. Showing the benefit derived from frequenting the assemblies of the faithful, the seraphic doctor observes that Saul, on joining a company of prophets became himself a prophet, and being separated from them, fell into reprobation. St. Thomas being absent from the assembly of the apostles was deprived of the sight of our Saviour lately risen, and on his return to them he received this honour; and it was when all the disciples were assembled together that they all received the Holy Ghost.† In fact, it was in the churches that the most signal conversions in the middle ages were known to have been made. Many who entered like that old man seen by Abbot Paul, black and cloudy, drawn contrarywise by demons, while their good angel followed at a distance, returned from it like him, shining with a sudden whiteness, having their good angel close at their side, while the demons followed afar off.‡ "St. Mary of Egypt," say the old writers, "may proceed with the devout multitude of pilgrims to the holy city, to celebrate the festival of the exaltation of the cross, less to adore him who died on it, than to render it the witness of her disorders, and yet then perhaps will be the moment when the designs of the mercy of God may call her to rise from the dead. The Church prays that our vices may be cured by the sacred mysteries, and that we may receive everlasting remedies;"|| that her solemnities "may both confer upon us the remedies of the present life, and grant us the rewards of eternity."§ History is not without mention of memorable examples to exhibit the fulfilment of such prayers. Will you hear the great poet who sung the recovery of Jerusalem, recount to you his own experience? "A time there was," says Tasso, "when I, with clouds of sensuality darkening my mind, could only recognize thee, O Lord, as a certain reason of the universe; for I doubted whether thou hadst created the world or endowed man with an immortal soul, and I doubted of many things which flowed from that source; for how could I firmly believe in the sacraments, or in the authority of the pontiff, or in hell, or purgatory, or in the Incarnation of thy Son, if I doubted of the immortality of the soul? Willingly I would have kept down my understanding, of itself curious and wandering, and believed whatever the holy Catholic Roman Church believes and teaches; but this I desired, O Lord, not so much through love of thy infinite good-

\* De Reformat. Hominis Exter. cap. 80.

† Ivonis Carnot. Decret. pars xvii. 58.

‡ Speculum Novitiorum, cap. 23.

|| Post Com. Exub. Sab. § Id.



ness, as through a certain servile fear which I had of the pains of hell; for often there used to sound horribly to my imagination the angelic trumpet of the great day of rewards and punishments; and I saw thee sitting upon the clouds, and I heard thee utter words full of terror, depart ye cursed into everlasting fire. And this thought was so strong in me, that sometimes I used to be obliged to impart it to some friend or acquaintance, and in consequence of this fear I used to go to confession and to communion in the times and manner prescribed by thy Roman Church; and if at any time I thought I had omitted mention of any sin through negligence or shame, though it was ever so little and vile, I repeated my confession, and often made a general confession of all my errors. Yet thou knowest that always I desired the exaltation of thy faith with an incredible affection, and that I always wished, though perhaps with a fervour more mundane than spiritual, that the seat of thy faith and pontificate in Rome might be preserved for ever. And thou knowest that the name of Lutheran or heretic, was abhorred and abominated by me as a pestiferous thing, and that my doubts were merely an interior affliction, until thou didst begin to warm and rejoice my heart with the flames of thy love: and then by degrees, by means of frequenting oftener the sacred offices and praying every day, my faith grew stronger from day to day, and I became sensible from experience that it is thy gift, and I learned to see my past folly in having presumed to imagine, that I could discover by my intelligence the secret things of thy essence, and estimate by the measure of human reason, thy goodness, thy justice, thy omnipotence.”\*

This affecting passage only verifies what the writers of the middle ages affirm with regard to the effect of assisting and communicating at the sacred mysteries. “*Effectus Eucharistiæ*,” say they, “*sunt præservare à peccatis, augere gratiam, terrenorum odium infundere, ad æternorum amorem mentem elevare, illuminare intellectum, succendere affectum, conferre animæ et corpori puritatem, conscientiæ pacem et lætitiâ, atque inseparabilem cum Deo unionem.*” To these adorable mysteries of the altar the faithful came, pressed by various wants. “Some,” as St. Bonaventura says, “hastened thither, moved by the force of calamity to lay their sorrows at the feet of Jesus. Others came to desire some grace and especial mercy, knowing that the heavenly Father can refuse nothing to his Son. Others were constrained to fly thither to proclaim their gratitude, and to pour forth the love of a thankful heart, knowing that there is nothing so worthy of being presented to God as the sacred body and blood of the eternal victim. Others pressed forward to give glory to God and to honour his saints, for it is in the celebration of these mysteries of love that we can pay worthy homage to his adorable majesty, and testify reverence for those who served him. Lastly, others hastened on the wings of charity and compassion, for it was there that they could hope to obtain salvation for the living and rest for the dead.”† Thus to the thirsty pilgrims through the rocks of the desert did the fountains of water appear. Thus did the generation of those who sought justice receive benediction from the Lord, and mercy from God their Saviour.

\* Torquato Tasso, Discorso sopra vari accidenti della sua vita. scritto a Scipion Gonzaga.

† De Reformat. Hominis Exter. cap. 82.















BW1402 .D57 1841 v.2  
Mores catholici, or, Ages of faith.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00066 6083